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"All nature is but art, unknown to thee;
All chance, direction, which thou canst not see;
All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good."

—Alexander Pope

PERSPECTIVE

The Loser in a Lawn Chair by Thomas Fleming 12
A Taoist guide to personal peace.

VIEWS

Life in the Happy Valley by Katherine Dalton 16
A backyard approach to a happy life.

Good News 20
Eight reasons why things aren't as bad as you think: by George Garrett, E. Christian Kopff, Chilton Williamson Jr., Jane Greer, Odie B. Faulk, Harold O.J. Brown, John Shelton Reed, and Janet Scott Barlow.

OPINIONS

A Durable Fire by George Core 27
George Garrett: *Entered From the Sun*. A glorious close to a glorious trilogy.

The Wonder of Academe by William H. Nolte 29
Harry S. Ashmore: *Unseasonable Truths: The Life of Robert Maynard Hutchins*. Remembering the last university president to say the emperor has no clothes.

Affirmative Scholarship by Murray N. Rothbard 32
Thomas Sowell: *Preferential Policies: An International Perspective*. Another flawed study of race and ethnicity.

REVIEWS

Ivan Doig brings his McCaskill trilogy to a worthy close, says **A. Carl Bredahl** ◆ Kingsley Amis's latest novel is a delightful read, writes **J.O. Tate** ◆ **Gregory McNamee** praises the writings of Andrei Codrescu ◆ Ellis Amburn's book on Roy Orbison is biography as itinerary, reports **Janet Barlow** ◆ **Wayne Lutton** applauds Paul and Anne Ehrlich's study of population ◆ **Michael Warder** recommends W. Bruce Lincoln's *The Great Reforms* 35

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter From Switzerland: Snow and Chocolates by Geoffrey Wagner 43

Letter From the Lower Right: What I Did on My Vacation by John Shelton Reed 44

VITAL SIGNS

The Last Jeffersonian by Bill Kauffman 46

The Life of an 'Old Republican': Nathaniel Macon by Clyde Wilson 48

DEPARTMENTS

POLEMICS & EXCHANGES 4

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS 6

PRINCIPALITIES & POWERS by Samuel Francis 10

POETRY
Sleepwalker 15
and
For Goodness' Sake 18
by Dabney Stuart

ON THE COVER

Cover illustration by Emilia Fitz.

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Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE
Vol. 14, No. 12 December 1990

On 'Women's Studies'

The first half of Elizabeth Fox-Genovese's article "Whose Women's Studies?" (September 1990) seems to be a fair and balanced account of the struggle between passionate feminists, scholars in the field of women's studies, and those of us who question or oppose feminist efforts to "transform the curriculum." She admits the central role of radical feminists and concedes that their motives, objectives, and tactics are political.

I am sorry she did not take a moment to explain to her readers something about the full effect of this kind of politics on collegiality, curriculum planning, and the integrity of the academy. She touches on this in a general way, but such generalities have little meaning to those outside the profession. Perhaps all is sweetness and light at Emory, but quite the reverse is the case in my institution and others around the country. What about quotas, official or covert, in faculty hiring? What about the application of different standards in promotion and tenure decisions? What about the termination of white, male professors to make room for female professors? What about the "packing" of faculty committees to protect curriculum proposals from serious questions? What about harassment policies that threaten punishment of students and faculty who express themselves openly? What about the effect of "group politics" on reasoned discourse and faculty relationships? And what about the teaching of suspicion and anger in the classroom?

The second half of the article and the bold peroration should be read carefully by anyone who is trying to distinguish women's studies and radical feminism. Fox-Genovese seems to blame the troubles on those who defend the traditional canon. Using such language as "outraged and bigoted opposition," "sorcerer's apprentice," "bunker mentality," and "self-proclaimed defenders of inherited culture," she warns us that "unilateral opposition will only drive it [the women's studies movement] further down the road of stiffening opposition to Western culture as a whole." Translated into plain English, this simply means that those who stand in our way have only themselves to blame when we tighten the noose.

I hear these expressions all the time. But, I must insist that it is not the kind of language used by those who seek a middle ground. I am sorry that Professor Fox-Genovese chose to address us in this fashion in an otherwise useful article.

—*William C. Burris*
Greensboro, NC

After reading Professor Fox-Genovese's article (September 1990) one wonders why exegetes for "women's studies" always seem to fall short, into a maze of unchallenged vagueness and self-congratulation. Possibly because feminists resort to what Eric Voegelin, in a treatment of Karl Marx, referred to as "pseudo-logic," which should not be surprising, since feminism is an avowedly radical, revisionist, socialistic endeavor that has surmounted most intellectual obstacles merely by ignoring them.

Professor Fox-Genovese's quote from the final paper of an enlightened young woman won over to feminism conveys the usual impression that the students seem unaware of the radical origins of the program and that the course content of "women's studies" is not quite on the higher level one might reasonably expect from a university—a level that is discussed so remarkably well by most of the other writers in the same *Chronicles* issue. Women enjoy our enduring respect as an integral part of humanity too completely to allow their self-focused, introspective, solipsistic segmentation *as a group*, or as just another 20th-century special, separate interest.

This "pseudo-logical" approach states "feminism is justified because we say it is justified." This is why Professor Fox-Genovese could write volumes of tangled rhetoric trying to justify a university status for a junior-high-level program and still not alter the fact that there is no more intellectual justification for "women's studies" than for "men's studies," etc. The very names

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convey a fatuous, doctrinaire caricature of higher learning, a sop to a petticoat junction turned revolutionary — the university's Trojan Horse. Despite such distraction, the challenge for men and women will remain ineluctably the same: to continue to learn how best to live as members of society, *as individuals*, true to their respective, distinct natures and without a politicized egotistical focus on one gender or the other, leading to hypertrophy of the species.

— *W. Edward Chynoweth*
Sanger, CA

Dr. Fox-Genovese Replies:

The responses to my recent piece in *Chronicles* offer a salutary reminder of why, persisting reservations notwithstanding, I continue to take pride in my association with women's studies. They also shake my hopes that those of us who insist that women's studies meet the highest scholarly standards can look for allies on the right. More's the pity.

Mr. Burris has my deepest sympathy and, in most instances, would probably have my political support as well. The horrors he describes do occur — too frequently to permit any of us to be complacent — and, if I read the signs of the times correctly, they are likely to increase. Indeed, he evokes only the symptoms of the deepest problem, namely the growing tendency to substitute entitlement for achievement as the criteria for academic positions. In the worst case scenario, intellectual standards and academic freedom are becoming the stakes in an escalating war for control of our campuses.

There are no justifications for the excesses of which Mr. Burris writes. But there is, as people like Edward Chynoweth regularly insist, a small problem of human nature. Without defending unacceptable practices of preferential treatment, it is possible to point out that some women and their allies are merely doing unto others what has, for decades, been done to them. Decades, not centuries. The issue is not the ideological cant of men's "domination" or "suppression" of women throughout history. The issue is the documented reality of the systematic exclusion of professional (female) individuals from the positions for which they are highly qualified.

Having experienced discrimination does not justify discrimination against others. But unless one understands that women have been massively discriminated against in professional employment, including in the academy, one will never understand the deep conviction that informs the various attempts to right previous wrongs. For wrongs there have been.

In the academy, as throughout much of our society, we are confronting a situation in which civil society has failed to reform itself. That failure has led many women to turn to academic administrations and state and federal government to enforce impartial standards and, occasionally, even to redress previous imbalances.

Mr. Burris claims that my remarks about the potentially dangerous consequences of unilateral opposition to women's studies can be translated into plain English as "those who stand in our way have only themselves to blame when we tighten the noose." He has understood part of my meaning. For the rest, he has either misunderstood or attempted a polemical feint. The appropriate pronoun is not "we" but "they."

Gentlemen, there are women scholars and yes, heaven forfend, feminists who share what I should like to think is the essence of your commitment to standards, due process, free speech, and scholarship. But we are currently in a dangerous and exposed position. And without working alliances with others who share those commitments, however much they differ on other matters, we will go down to defeat. And so, I believe, will you.

As for Mr. Chynoweth, if he believes that our great Western culture has not disproportionately expressed the perceptions, goals, and identities of men (who, until very recently, were more often than not legally entitled to speak and act in the name of women), I do hope he can muster the same complacent acceptance of a postmodernist culture that overwhelmingly articulates the perceptions, goals, and identities of radical feminists.

Yes, the Western tradition belongs to us all, but those who have fashioned it have been disproportionately men. If women are not invited to find their own ways of identifying with it, they may well feel obliged to declare themselves its enemies. And in a dangerous world they will find allies.

Let me try one more time. The women's studies I advocate and have the honor to preside over at Emory University is precisely that — the study of women in history, society, and culture. It is not "feminist studies" for the good reason that we do not tolerate the imposition of any ideology but rather invite broad substantive and theoretical debate on all cogent issues. Had the history of women not been maliciously ignored for so long, we might not need a special program of this kind, much as we might not need African-American studies. That cannot now be helped. But I do hope that conservatives understand and respond to one of the messages I tried to deliver: some of us who are promoting women's studies want and badly need the intellectual contributions of scholars with viewpoints other than those now dominant. In this matter I stand with that eminent scholar Jacob Neusner, whose splendid call for opening the canon to African-American and ethnic studies (*National Review*, June 15, 1984) ought to be required reading.

JOHN SHELTON REED, longtime contributor to *Chronicles*, has recently published his ninth book, *Whistling Dixie: Dispatches from the South*. Published by the University of Missouri Press, *Whistling Dixie* is a collection of essays written by Professor Reed over the last ten years, many of which appeared first in these very pages. Professor Reed's many admirers will now be able to appreciate the full range of the South's most perceptive humorist. As Eugene Genovese writes in the foreword, these "sallies provide a delightful introduction to the corpus of Reed's work, at least for people who are willing to hear other voices and who retain the capacity to laugh at themselves."

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A YEAR AFTER HUGO: the Good Morning America helicopter made several passes over the creek today in preparation for the "one year anniversary of Hurricane Hugo" programming that was aired in September. Two of my shrimping relatives went in the ocean instead of participating in the ground-based interviews filmed in advance. Surely a good sign. The media harvest is winding down. The harvest of the sea triumphs.

Hooray and a sigh. Fifteen months ago my wife and I picked our way among the fallen trees that blocked these streets. On every side mud, marsh grass, and dead fish were mixed with parts of houses and house parts. An entire fleet of shrimp boats had been flung high and dry upon what was once "the hill." Helicopters hovered overhead that day as well, taking television photos that I suppose were shown that night or the next. We had no way of knowing, for electricity wouldn't return for another three weeks. And I assumed we got the usual ten-second "bite," but judging by what happened next there must have been much, much more. Huddling over a battery-operated radio that night, I heard the South Carolina governor declare that "the town of McClellanville no longer exists." "Reports of my death were greatly exaggerated," quipped Twain. The governor must have retracted soon after—and with a vengeance—for in the days that followed I would come to think "reports of our existence were greatly exaggerated."

True, I wasn't happy to hear our obituary. Especially since at least a hundred citizens of the town proper and thousands in the inundated area had miraculously survived a tidal surge of sixteen feet and hurricane winds that probably exceeded 175 mph. Many of us that morning had been wandering through the rubble being photographed. We weren't dead, just in shock and hardly prepared for the thirty-eight trailer trucks of relief supplies that arrived one night. Suddenly, there was an army of well-meaning help swelling our tiny community of 400 souls. President Bush even tried to squeeze in but was rerouted at the last minute down to Charleston. Bad weather was the official reason given but a false report to the Secret Service of dead bodies and rifles was the rumor. Rumors. There were lots of rumors and chaos that would rival the most surreal of Fellini's carnivals.

Despair, greed, and petty corruption. That's what the cynic in me recalls most. What lobe of the brain is that? Perhaps the rear-reptilian. Shame on me, for now almost one year later the town is at least recognizable. The large pines are gone but the great sprawling live oaks have survived. Homes have been repaired and new ones are being built. The shrimp boats are not leaning against houses but in the ocean towing. Dogs, church, children—what we expect of normalcy, all are there and in record time.

Without the federal disaster aid (delivered by sometimes generous, always bumbling bureaucrats), without the Marines (now I understand the concept of martial law), without the Corps of Engineers (the S.O.B.'s finally found a job big enough to suit them and they were very, very good at it), without the Red Cross (they tried), and without the insurance adjusters (your life is in the palm of their tightly gripped fist), without all these the rebuilding of the town would have dragged on for decades. Without the churches (God does exist—watch a Mennonite hammer), without all the volunteers (such astounding generosity from every corner of the country), without the cash donations and the truckloads of food, clothing, and building material, and without the media (they've got to be included), without all these it's possible our little community would never have rebuilt.

So why now, with the Good Morning America helicopter chopping off over the slightly crippled horizon, why do I feel such anger towards my fellow man and most of all towards myself? I'm not alone. Tempers still flare. Depression and insomnia are the norm. The subject of Hugo Stress drifts through every conversation. It's not psychobabble if it's happening to you or your friends and neighbors. Obviously, all this anger has something to do with loss. We have our town back, but it's not "our town." I'm guessing that the words that apply are the optimism of innocence. Maybe we lost it at the movies. Or maybe we just lost it.

—*William P. Baldwin*

WHEN THE NEA'S Council and chairman last July refused to fund four of the eighteen "solo performers and mime" grants the NEA staff had recommended, there was a tremendous reaction from the artists involved and the Joseph Papp crowd. *Rejected!* went the headline in the *Washington Post*'s Show section. Most of the coverage concentrated on the personal orientation of the three "out" rejectees, and on the fourth's (performance artist Karen Finley) now infamous way of expressing herself artistically by smearing chocolate on her naked body.

Less emphasized—though I am indebted to the *Post* for mentioning it—was the fact that one rejectee, Holly Hughes, has received funding already this year from the NEA's Playwriting division for the same script for which she was almost funded by Solo Performers. Some might call that double-dipping. But when asked point-blank a staffer in the Theater program assured me that submitting a single piece for both Playwriting and Performance Art was perfectly OK. "Oh that's fine," she said. "It's two completely separate panels"—in other words, two different funding categories with two different sets of judges.

Furthermore, all four of these *Rejecteds!* have received numerous grants from the NEA over the years. Tom Miller told the *Post* that he had received "four or five" NEA grants in the past eight years, Karen Finley has had something like nine, and both Holly Hughes and John Fleck received NEA grants just last year. Both Hughes and Finley submitted three applications this year, in three different categories, all of them recommended for funding by their reviewing panels.

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An installation of Karen Finley's that was being shown at New York's Franklin Furnace in July when all this broke was also NEA-funded, according to Furnace spokeswoman Barbara Pollack. No doubt those were real tears Ms. Finley sobbed to the crowd at Joseph Papp's Public Theater when she told them, "I am suffering." She is fighting for a very significant portion of her income.

She may be winning. Ms. Finley and Ms. Hughes's other rejected applications, in the Experimental category, were to be reconsidered in November. Ardis Krainik, general director of Chicago's Lyric Opera, told the papers in support of the two that "You know whose side we're on. This will come up in November and it will be fairly treated"—seemingly a promise that the funding will go through. Indeed, by an unanimous vote the Council reversed itself on its May decision not to give money to the Philadelphia Institute of Contemporary Art, which started this whole mess by funding the Mapplethorpe exhibit.

Multiple grant-getting is not limited to theater people. In January the NEA awarded a $20,000 "American Jazz Master Fellowship" grant to George Allan Russell, who had already received three NEA Music fellowships.

The fact is, rules against double-dipping or on-going funding of certain favorite artists are lax or nonexistent at the NEA. The Literature program seems to be the most strict: you may not apply for both a creative writing fellowship and a translation fellowship in the same year, you may not apply for three years after receiving a Literature grant, and you may never receive more than three Literature fellowships over the course of a lifetime.

In the Theater program, the application states that performance artists and mimes may not be funded for more than five consecutive years, though this sentence is qualified by a "generally" and there seems to be no difficulty in nonsequential funding. And getting, say, a Performance Art grant this year in no way precludes you from getting a Dance grant next year. This seems to be what Tom Miller has done. What limits there are at the NEA are only within categories of programs, not within programs (except Literature) or across the board.

What seems to happen more often, though, is that producing organizations will apply for a grant that will include monies for, say, a Karen Finley performance. The money is granted to a place like Franklin Furnace or The Kitchen in New York, which will keep some of the money for overhead costs, leaving the rest to be paid to the artist. This is how Serrano received his grant: it was a subgrant given to him by a Winston-Salem group.

When asked if arts organizations list on their applications whom they plan to include in their presentation series, NEA spokesman Kathy Christie replied, "They do. But then, too, sometimes they haven't been able to schedule it all for the year and they have to get back to the Arts Endowment. It's a little on the muddy side, but most of the time the Arts Endowment, by the time everything is done, knows exactly who's done what."

Referring to Karen Finley's multigrants, Ms. Christie says that as for "one person getting eight or nine grants—they did *not*; they got maybe a fellowship here and a fellowship there." In other words, because Franklin Furnace received the $20,000 of which $1,000 went for Ms. Finley's July show, that should not count as a NEA grant to Karen Finley, even though she was paid with NEA monies to perform. The question is, of course, does floating the money through a producing organization, rather than giving it directly to the artist, mean that Karen Finley's chocolate-smearing has been any less tax-supported?

As George Garrett pointed out in his July *Chronicles* article on arts funding—and as someone who has sat on the Literature program expert panels he should know—given the tremendous number of applicants who are rejected, what does get funded is not funded by accident.

Naturally, that is especially true within individual programs like Literature. But do the various programs talk to each other? According to Ms. Christie, "All the time." So Dance presumably knows that they are funding an artist who received a grant from Performance Art last year, and the Professional Theater Presenters category of the Theater program certainly knows that an NEA-funded theater series includes shows by artists who have received individual grants. There is nothing unintentional or against the rules or "mistaken" about it.

What is most disturbing about all this is not the four *Rejecteds*' artistic pretensions or greediness; it's that nobody at the NEA seems to think there is anything wrong with double-dipping, or jumping from program to program to keep somebody funded, or with getting around the fellowship limits by finding an organization that will do the publicly funded equivalent of money-laundering.

—*Katherine Dalton*

FREEDOM OF RELIGION is important to Americans. So is freedom of expression. Both freedoms are traditionally guaranteed by the First Amendment, which prohibits government interference in religious freedom either by establishing a religion or by forbidding religious exercises. What was not envisaged was that the "free expression" provisions of the same amendment—from which the freedoms of speech and of the press are derived—could be used to "establish" government attacks on religion. Yet as the Serrano and Mapplethorpe controversies unfolded, it became clear that government will not only prohibit many innocent-seeming activities that it judges favorable to a religion, but it will endorse and fund activities that are openly hostile to religion and religious values.

Last August 29, attorneys of the Rutherford Institute of Charlottesville, Virginia, filed a federal lawsuit in the U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., against the National Endowment for the Arts and its harried chairman, John Frohnmayer, accusing them of taking a position of "open and notorious hostility towards religion." Thus Rutherford has made explicit, in legal language, what millions of us have sensed.

Specifically targeted was a grant of fifteen thousand dollars by the NEA for the creation and exhibition of a catalogue produced by David Wojnarowicz of New York entitled *Tongues of Flame*. According to the Rutherford attorneys, "the government-funded catalogue includes an image depicting Jesus Christ as an intravenous drug user and refers to

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Roman Catholic prelate Cardinal John O'Connor as a 'fat cannibal.'" "Religious people must no longer be personal targets of cannon fire from National Endowment projects," Rutherford Institute President John W. Whitehead said.

We have reached the point where things considered acceptable and protected by law if done under secular or antireligious auspices are judged criminal if done for identifiably religious reasons. For example, although state and federal courts have been very generous in granting or extending the Constitution's right of freedom of speech to various other forms of activities—most recently and notoriously, flag-burning—last February a divided Maryland Court of Appeals upheld the conviction of a man who "disturbed the peace" by reading the Bible and preaching outside a Hagerstown abortion clinic in May 1988, an offense he perpetrated during three successive periods of two to three minutes each. The *Washington Post*, a pro-abortion newspaper, came to Jerry Eanes' defense in a strongly worded editorial. It endorsed dissenting Judge John C. Eldridge's protests that Eanes "was engaged in free speech in its most pristine and classic form." Eanes was convicted under an anti-noise statute that specifically bars attempts to "willfully disturb any neighborhood . . . by loud and unseemly noises." As of this writing he has already served 45 days in jail for his reprehensible behavior.

Most Americans do not, however, believe that every expression ought to be allowed, and certainly not that every expression should be subsidized, regardless of its content. A poll recently published by the Thomas Jefferson Center for the Freedom of Expression shows that while people want the freedom to say what they think, they believe that some rather definite limits should be set on public expression and performances, and particularly on government subsidies for the same. The Jefferson Center poll indicated that 90 percent of its 1,500 respondents—supposedly a representative cross section of America—believe the government has no business telling them what to say, and while 74 percent back artists' rights to display works that might be offensive, 72 percent oppose spending of tax money for "objectionable art."

This poll reveals that a healthy majority, ranging from about 60 percent to over 80 percent, would grant government the right to censor to some degree public art displays and performances, especially those funded with public money. What is provoking the media uproar about censorship is not fear of the power of a few self-appointed censors, but an awareness of the fact that the general public really does want some standards of decency and civility.

—*Harold O.J. Brown*

BARNARD COLLEGE'S "First Year Seminar Committee" has decided to use a grant from the Ford Foundation to encourage the faculty to use the works of "minority women" in their courses. So reports Herbert London in the Spring 1990 issue of *Academic Questions*, the journal of the National Association of Scholars. It seems that faculty members who put such works into their reading lists will receive a "stipend," to be used, says Helena Foley, spokesman for the committee, "to buy time to discover and read works." As Dean London says, this is simple bribery. Foundation money thus influences college affairs, in this case extending the influence of an otherwise insignificant fringe group. "Is it any wonder," he asks, "the curriculum is in disarray and the defenders of Western civilization are often hiding in their office bunkers?"

The Barnard case will come as a surprise to those unfamiliar with the ways of today's academic administrators and faculties, but in fact this kind of corruption has been going on for a decade or so. Here at Mount Holyoke College, where I teach, it appeared about ten years ago in the form of foundation grants meant to "encourage" (*i.e.*, buy) the faculty's participation in such things as interdisciplinary teaching and the development of courses in "quantitative reasoning," "writing across the campus," and what I guess we could call postmodern humanities. As at Barnard, participants received a "stipend."

Payment has become a standard method of persuading a significant number of chosen faculty to support administrative policies. Since most of the money comes from foundations, and since colleges seldom do anything independently, I assume the practice is widespread. The payment can be as absurdly low as $100 for attending a seminar and reading a few books—which tells one something about faculty self-respect—and as high as about 10 percent of one's salary for actually planning a new course. This makes a very nice payoff. The money is routed through deans, presidents, and handpicked committees.

This form of corruption is so entrenched that by now perhaps a third of the faculty has received some of this money at some time. One consequence is that without bribery it is now difficult to get faculty to do anything beyond their basic teaching assignment. After all, what young professor is going to spend hours advising students or sitting on a busy college committee when he can earn approval as well as a "stipend" by reading a few books and attending a few meetings? On the other hand, for those faculty who persevere in researching and teaching in the central subjects of the curriculum, whether in the humanities or the sciences, virtue has to be its own reward. No matter how able they are, they will get little if any recognition from their administrative masters or from the would-be professors who amuse themselves with disbursing foundation funds to colleges.

Bribery, administered and received in raptures of high-mindedness, is one example of the corruption endemic in higher education. This, after all, is the profession that invented the seven-month year and the two-day week.

—*F.W. Brownlow*

THE IAS's directorship today resembles the Presidency from Kennedy to Carter—a series of one-termers. Three directors have come and gone in not 13 years, with directors having left the job, dropped the job, or been driven from the job. Now with Marvin Goldberger's departure without finishing even his first five-year appointment (whether he was fired or just quit is not at issue), we have to ask, what of the future?

The truth is, if Einstein hadn't spent his declining years at IAS, the Institute would hardly enjoy the high visibility that even today, three decades after

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Einstein's death, draws attention to what goes on in this sleepy hollow in the western corner of Princeton. So what is to be done to regain the preeminence that the Institute once rightly claimed for itself?

IAS should be the nation's premier research institute and a model for all others; today, in most fields, it simply is not. IAS is truly distinguished in math, astrophysics, and particle physics; not only because of the prominence of some of its permanent faculty in those areas, but also because of the constant infusion of new energy in the form of post-docs and scholars who come to join in projects of collaborative research.

Alas, the social sciences and the historical school scarcely register in the American academy. Their permanent professors are not prominent, though they publish; they do not conduct collaborative research projects with generations of IAS members, though they may chat with them from day to day; and they do not attract platoons of post-docs whom they absorb into ongoing and shared research. This permanent faculty does not teach students; does not engage with younger colleagues; does not share work with and learn from senior colleagues as they come from year to year; and in general lives a very insulated and—consequently—intellectually flaccid life.

Clearly, actions need to be taken to improve the place financially, politically, socially, and intellectually. First, IAS needs to reform the board of directors so that the nonacademic members contribute funds to IAS in a substantial way, as part of a major drive for new capital; the policy of NYU's board, "Give, get, or get out," worked wonders in getting rid of the time-servers and bringing in activists with a commitment to the institution. I would expect each member of the board to give or get IAS one million dollars a year at a minimum, or to leave; today the board is dead weight.

Second, IAS should renew its relationship with the National Endowment for the Humanities. When last December IAS told the NEH to take its money and shove it, throwing away three-quarters of a million dollars on the spurious claim of defending academic freedom (see Cultural Revolutions, June 1990), it was seen in Washington as making a claim on entitlements that the NEH cannot accord to any institution. A long-term relationship with a major funding agency in the humanities was jeopardized, and many other Washington funding agencies saw IAS in a less-than-flattering light.

Third, IAS must recruit women and blacks. The IAS has to give serious thought to recruiting qualified women for its mathematics and natural science schools, which at this time have disproportionately few women. The mostly-male and lily-white character of the Institute also contradicts the character of American intellectual life, enriched as it is by the participation of women and blacks as much as by European- and Asian-Americans. You don't need affirmative action or quotas to correct this.

Fourth, IAS should bring in outsiders. I would set up advisory councils, made up of outside scholars of the highest standing, to organize (on the model of the NEH summer seminars for college teachers) annual seminars, led by outsiders, chosen competitively, with each full-year seminar director in charge of attracting a dozen colleagues to share in a collaborative project. The selection of the seminar professors, invited for one or two or even three years, depending on the character of the research project, would be made by panels of outside experts, from which all locals would be excluded; such panels would insure that local prejudice or intrigue play no role. The alternative is to close the schools of history and of social science entirely, by not replacing the existing professors as they retire, and by encouraging those among them who can find other employment to do so.

Fifth, IAS needs to cut out insiders. I would loosen the ties to Princeton University, which are currently incestuous. The Institute's relationships to other universities should be defined by the scholarly excellence and even eminence of those outsiders brought to IAS, not by the school ties those outsiders wear.

So long as the IAS continues to congratulate itself on its distinguished past, it will continue its long-term decline into mediocrity and irrelevance: an institute for advanced sinecures, an institution for advanced salaries.

—*Jacob Neusner*

FORREST MCDONALD, the historian, and poet Charles Causley are the recipients of the 1990 Ingersoll Prizes. McDonald received the Richard M. Weaver Award for Scholarly Letters, and Causley, the T.S. Eliot Award for Creative Writing. The awards, each of which carries a cash prize of $20,000, acknowledge authors of abiding importance whose works affirm the fundamental principles of Western civilization.

Forrest McDonald was born in Orange, Texas, in 1927. He served in the U.S. Navy in 1945-1946 before going to the University of Texas at Austin, from which he took his Ph.D. in 1955. He has taught at Brown, Columbia, Duke, and New York University, and since 1976 he has been a professor of history at the University of Alabama, where he was named Distinguished Research Professor in 1987. He is the author of 15 books, including *We the People: The Economic Origins of the Constitution* (1958), *E Pluribus Unum: The Formation of the American Republic* (1965), and *Novus Ordo Seclorum: The Intellectual Origins of the Constitution* (1985), for which he was a finalist for the 1986 Pulitzer Prize. He is generally considered the leading scholar of the American Constitution.

Charles Causley was born in Launceston, Cornwall, in 1917. He served in the Royal Navy from 1940-1946 and was for 25 years a schoolteacher before becoming a full-time writer. He has been writer-in-residence at the University of Western Australia, the Footscray Institute of Technology, Victoria, and the School of Fine Arts, Banff, Alberta. In addition to his own collections of poetry, he is the author of a number of books for young readers and the editor of several anthologies of verse. His verse plays and libretti for musical theater include adaptations of the 13th-century *Aucassin and Nicolette*, Dylan Thomas's *The Doctor and the Devils*, and Hans Christian Andersen's *The Tinderbox*. He has also just finished work on *Aesop*, an original text for the National Youth Music Theatre of Great Britain. He was

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awarded the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry in 1967 and was appointed Commander of the British Empire in the New Year Honours List in 1986 for his services to poetry.

The Ingersoll Foundation is the philanthropic division of Ingersoll Milling Machine Company of Rockford, Illinois. The Rockford Institute administers the prizes. Past recipients of the T.S. Eliot Award include George Garrett (1989), Walker Percy (1988), Octavio Paz (1987), V.S. Naipaul (1986), Eugene Ionesco (1985), Anthony Powell (1984), and Jorge Luis Borges (1983). E.O. Wilson (1989), Edward Shils (1988), Josef Pieper (1987), Andrew Lytle (1986), Robert Nisbet (1985), Russell Kirk (1984), and James Burnham (1983) are previous recipients of the Richard M. Weaver Award.

Principalities & Powers

by Samuel Francis

Until the discovery in the spring of 1989 that the National Endowment for the Arts was conducting tax-supported amphibious landings on the farther shores of anatomy, physiology, and abnormal psychology, probably few Americans had ever heard of the relatively obscure agency that presides over the floating wreckage of the American arts. Founded in 1965 and with an annual budget costing less than a good battleship, the NEA has gloried in the anonymity that bureaucrats and the avant-garde underworld covet. But once the light of publicity had begun to shine on the NEA's woodwork, and the maggoty creatures that infest it had started scrambling for their beloved darkness, the bureau that serves as a kind of federal gestapo of the dominant culture quickly became a synonym for the sewage in which these august personages love to wallow.

The first scandal arose from the revelation that the agency had helped finance exhibitions of the work of the late Robert Mapplethorpe, now deceased of AIDS, who had missed his true vocation of dressing women's hair, arranging flowers, or selling antiques and had instead dedicated his genius to the high and mysterious art of photography. Mr. Mapplethorpe was indeed a man of no small talent and reportedly commanded no less than $20,000 for a sitting. Had he confined his career to perpetuating the images of weddings and commencements and capturing the toothless gapes of bubbling infants, he might have passed on to the great Turkish bathhouse in the sky with nary a peep from his following or his adversaries. But, as it developed, Mapplethorpe concocted the notion that he was called to employ his gifts in enshrining on film forever some of his favorite recreations. Since the content of most of these pictures is such that not even adult bookstores could display them with impunity, he had no recourse but to call them "art."

What exactly these photographs depict may not be fully described in such wholesome publications as *Chronicles*, and indeed their precise characterization might elude even one of such jaded imagination as your correspondent. One may search the works of Krafft-Ebing and Havelock Ellis in vain to find parallels to some of the deviations Mapplethorpe relished.

L'Affaire Mapplethorpe might have passed with merely the usual struttings and expectorations from congressmen who saw in it a convenient vehicle for posturing as latter-day Catos, but it soon was followed by the exposure of even more bizarre practices that the NEA had helped to finance. There was the case of Andres Serrano, who delights in portraying objects of religious devotion immersed in urine and who readily acknowledges his preoccupation with bodily fluids of all kinds. Later there were confirmed reports of NEA support for the exotic entertainments devised by the guild of "performance artists," most of which make Mapplethorpe's creations look like the crossword puzzles in *Jack 'n' Jill*. Aside from the live nudity, dabbles in excrement, and contortions of bodily orifices in which these artists delight, their work also emits what the performers are pleased to claim as political pronunciamentoes. Although the political meaning of the acts escaped most of those who witnessed them or read accounts in the yellow press, the artists themselves were eager to explain that they were exposing the "oppression of women" and other forms of "cultural hegemony" inflicted on us by the sinister and ubiquitous "Eurocentrists" and their heterosexual cohorts.

As the world now knows, the whole sordid mess was seized upon by religious fanatics, conservative congressmen, New York cab drivers, and other fossilized representatives of nearly extinct political species who imagined that there might be something objectionable in using the moneys handed up by taxpayers to finance the production and exhibition of works these same taxpayers found abhorrent. As the temperature of the congressional battle escalated, platoons of actors, actresses, and aesthetes of all descriptions bellied up to the bars on Capitol Hill to explain with their customary hauteur why taxpayers and other white trash should shut up, fork over, and docilely submit to the subsidized subversion of their own institutions.

To their credit, a number of congressmen thought otherwise, and for the past year or so they have been trying to draft legislation that would prohibit the NEA from sponsoring obscenity, blasphemy, and other objectionable excesses of liberated speech. North Carolina's Senator Jesse Helms and California's Representative Dana Rohrabacher took the lead in trying to trim the NEA's lurid sails. But in the end they failed. Just before Congress scuttled off to tell the voters how much it had done for them in the past two years, it voted to reauthorize the NEA without any significant "content restrictions." It is noteworthy that President Bush played an important role in stopping legislation for such restrictions by coming out against it at a key moment in the debate.

In lieu of strong restrictions, it is probable that next year will see the revelation of even more scandals of the Mapplethorpe-Serrano-"performance artist" kidney and that the struggle in

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Congress will resume. Next time, one may hope, congressmen willing to do battle on the NEA issue will come loaded with heavier ammunition than they carried this year.

What conservative legislators need to do is not merely rest with restricting the content of what the NEA subsidizes but advance to questioning the whole concept of federal sponsorship of the arts. In the battle just concluded, they didn't do that, but confined their attention simply to efforts to eliminate obscenity and blasphemy. That omission points to a flaw in contemporary conservative political tactics and perhaps to an underlying misconception of what conservatives should be fighting for and against.

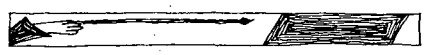
Conservative wrath about the NEA seems to have derived mainly from outrage at the misuse of public funds for unseemly projects and from realization that dwelling on such abuses would accrue to the political benefit of officeholders bold enough to campaign against them. But by failing to connect these abuses with the actual functioning and purposes of the NEA, proponents of "content restrictions" missed an opportunity to "raise consciousness," as our friends on the left like to put it, and thereby to mount a far more radical challenge to the dominance of liberalism than they expressed.

The ostensible rationale for the NEA, a creature of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society legislation of 1965, is, as President Johnson put it in asking for its creation, that "Government can seek to create conditions under which the arts can flourish." But the demand for federal support for the arts (and the humanities) was also an expression of the interests of the cultural and intellectual elites that have flourished in the United States throughout this century. Federal support for the sciences after World War II and following the Soviet launching of Sputnik excited the appetites of humanists and artists, who began to fear that they weren't getting their fair share of the federal boodle, and both the inept John Kennedy and the far more efficacious Johnson sought to set up an agency that would fatten and tame these literati.

The federal care and feeding of the intelligentsia, especially that part of it lodged in such mass bureaucratic and managerial organizations as universities and foundations, has been as fundamental to 20th-century liberalism as analogous catering to business titans has been to the Republican Party. In the 1960's, the cultural and intellectual elite played a crucial role both in writing the mood music for the New Frontier and the Great Society and in actually designing the sets and writing the script. "The liberal mood of 1960," writes historian Allen J. Matusow, "was largely defined by elite intellectuals residing on the East Coast, principally in New York City and Cambridge, Massachusetts. Constituting an intense subculture at the center of the nation's communication network, these intellectuals — nearly all of them liberals — shared a world view that profoundly influenced the political climate in this election year." The NEA — and to an even larger extent its sister agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities — were not only the eggheads' payoff for their support of the Democrats and their agenda but also an effort to wed or fuse permanently the intellectual and cultural elites with the managerial leviathan in Washington.

Of course, it wasn't the first such wedding. Historian Richard Hofstadter pointed out that in the Progressive Era of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the new, enlarged scale of intellectual and cultural institutions, paralleling the similar expansion of business and governments — "large universities with adequate libraries, laboratories, huge endowments, graduate schools, professional schools, and advancing salaries" — were essential to the whole Progressivist project in the state. "The development of regulative and humane legislation," wrote Hofstadter, "required the skills of lawyers and economists, sociologists and political scientists, in the writing of laws and in the staffing of administrative and regulative bodies. Controversy over such issues created a new market for the books and magazine articles of the experts and engendered a new respect for their specialized knowledge. Reform brought with it the brain trust." In the Depression, Franklin Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration undertook the first formal engagement of the intelligentsia and the state, and it paid off when, as Hofstadter recognized, "a generation of artists and intellectuals was nursed through a trying period and became wedded to the New Deal and devoted to Roosevelt liberalism." Not only did the intellectuals need liberalism, but also liberalism needed the intellectuals.

Since the real — as opposed to the ostensible — purpose of this fusion of state and culture was to facilitate the social reconstruction and engineering that liberalism championed, the "abuses" of the NEA really ought not to surprise us. The subversion of "Eurocentric," "male chauvinist," and "homophobic" institutions and beliefs is only the most recent stage of the never-ending struggle to liberate us from the American Way and replace it with the emancipated and militant cosmopolitanism of what is now openly called the New World Order. Obstacles to the entrenchment of that order — and of its transnational bureaucratic and technocratic elites — such as the integrity of American cultural tradition and the social institutions that support it have to be "deconstructed" if the elites are to perfect their own cultural hegemony. So far from "abusing" the funds appropriated for the NEA, Mapplethorpe, Serrano, the performance artists, and the munchkins who awarded them their grants were simply breeding the ideological progeny that the marriage of state and intelligentsia has promised from the first.



If conservative politicians are really going to resist the deracination that the NEA has come to symbolize, they will have to broaden their attack on it beyond moralism and fiscal responsibility. Restricting the content of publicly funded art to stop only the most offensive productions will accomplish little to preserve traditional norms and institutions from the federally endowed assault on them. Mapplethorpe and Company offer a valuable opportunity to inform Americans of exactly what is really going on in the belly of the beast, why it is going on, and why it is so difficult to stop. It remains to be seen whether contemporary conservatives have the imagination to understand the challenge or the courage to confront it, let alone any desire to resist it seriously in the first place.

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Anna Mycek-Wodecki

The Loser in a Lawn Chair

by Thomas Fleming

We are often accused of looking on the dark side of everything. One editorialist even found it amusing that we occasionally compared contemporary America with the Byzantine Empire, as if such a comparison were not an insult to the Christian civilization of Constantinople. Despite our reputation, we like to think of ourselves as hardheaded optimists, and we thought it would be amusing to play Pollyanna for a change. For my own part, what I have to offer resembles, at least in tone, *The Consolation of Philosophy* more than *The Power of Positive Thinking*.

It is not always easy to discern the line of demarcation that divides one era from another, but whatever else it might mean, this century has been the painful weaning process in which European and American man has cut himself off from the civilization that gave him birth. The ancient classics, the faiths rooted in the Scriptures, the artistic and intellectual methods that took shape in the Renaissance—all of these survive now only here and there in little monastic pockets of specialized learning or sectarian commitment. But for the most part the Christian and classical culture so ardently defended in the earlier years of this century by Carducci, Belloc, and Eliot now are reduced to so much bric-a-brac in museums and fine-print type in a guidebook to Europe.

What is the bright side of cultural dissolution? Simply this. Such things have happened before, and they will happen again. There are lives worth living to be lead now as much as any time before, and those of us who put their faith in the maker of all things must realize that if things must get much worse before they get better, they will, nonetheless, get better. Since so much that good men have labored for is now out of our hands as individuals, we can concentrate on the only things that have ever really mattered.

This is a hard lesson for European man, who has always found it difficult to take life as it comes. It was a Hellenized Phoenician—not a Greek—who founded Stoicism, and it was no accident that such a creed of resignation became popular during an era in which the old world of the Greek polis was breaking down, to be replaced by kingdoms, cosmopolitan empires, and bureaucracy. A typical Alexandrian Greek might have come from Cyrene or Rhodes and could spend his life in the service of Macedonian kings and in the company of strangers. The old political life of the assembly, marketplace, and council was now as much an

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irrelevant fiction as our own Electoral College. There is little point in blaming the Stoics for their lack of patriotism or their cosmopolitan indifference to all those myths of blood and soil that had given rise to Hellenic civilization. The important feature of Stoicism was not that it taught people to be locally irresponsible "citizens of the world," but that it instructed them in the duties and responsibilities of whatever station they found themselves in. "Every hour," counseled the Emperor Marcus, "consider sturdily as a Roman and as a man that which is in your hands to do, scrupulously, and with unfeigned seriousness, compassion, freedom, and justice."

It was this philosophy that the Romans, whose upper classes remained civic-minded even under the empire, managed to transform from a creed of passive individualism to an armed doctrine of civil responsibility. The most humane of the Romans—himself no Stoic but "a pig from Epicurus' sty"—was a freedman's son with an almost Christian notion of resignation:

Aequam memento rebus in arduis
Servare mentem. . . .

In my own version of Horace, I would say: accept the good things without gloating and endure evils if not without complaining, at least without pillorying the universe for letting you down.

This is not a question of equanimity, as my friends and enemies alike will tell you. It is really more resignation than even temper that affords me a certain willingness to accept things as they are and observe events from whatever place I find myself in. What is the alternative? Spend your life brooding over the criminal misconduct of the American Congress or tracing the stream of poisons that gush through the aquifer? We have no control over such things. Politics is the concern of a free people; imperial subjects are lucky—very lucky, indeed—if they can carve out some small niche where their decisions count for something. Rear your children, meet your obligations, and let the empire take care of itself. Be content: although scum generally rises to the top, in the end it is always skimmed off and thrown away.

For as far back as I can remember, I have always known that I was born into the wrong period of history, but it has always been my opinion that most people born into this century are actually displaced persons, who deserve a better fate than modernity. Part of this is the natural condition of men and women, whose hard lot it is to be torn between two worlds: the world of everyday experience in which our bodies are at home, and that other world, that land of heart's desire from which our spirits are exiled:

Ever-blooming are the joys of heaven's high
paradise.
Cold age deafs not there our ears nor vapours dim
our eyes.
Glory there the sun outshines, whose beams the
blessed only see.

But, as this world spins further and further out of the orbit of its star, we find ourselves less and less at home. We are resident aliens in our own country, and one place can be as good as another, if all we require is a seat in the window from which we can watch the world go by.

In my own case, they have not been particularly interesting places: a dying city at the end of the Great Lakes, college towns, suburbs, a shrimping village, Rockford. On the few occasions that I was actually able to decide upon a place to live, nothing turned out as I had planned. Either my resolve weakened and I did not move to Nova Scotia, or the destiny that I thought I held was ripped from my hands by the winds of cause and effect that blow from who knows what caves of what malevolent gods. I moved back to Charleston to escape the futility of teaching only to find myself responsible for educating a hundred children from five to eighteen in a village that is as much the antithesis of Charleston as any place in low country South Carolina can be. I went to San Francisco to be part of the new life of the late 60's and spent most of my days reading Tacitus, James Thompson, and Lionel Johnson on the roof of a retirement hotel that seemed to exist only to abuse Social Security pensioners.

Some would say, especially if they have been reading Nietzsche, that such temperaments reflect an inability to "say yes to life." That is probably true enough, but in my case at least I have never been able to say no either. Why is it that on my first day in a strange city, I am sure to be asked directions? In Pisa last summer I was badgered by an officious group of arrogant tourists who demanded to know where the *touray pahndahntay* was. After several minutes of mutually incomprehensible conversation, I guessed—*la tour pendente*? Their Franco-Italian was even worse than my Americo-Italian.

I must have an open countenance—I know it is not an inviting one—and when I am asked a question on the street I always stop. This is not always a good idea in New York, where you are likely to hear a story that sounds like the last words of Dutch Schultz (which Dwight McDonald interpreted as unintended parody of Joyce). I have been mugged twice, as I began to explain that I did not have any spare change, at least not for people who were so importunate in their demands. Worse than being mugged, I have been dragged into things. What sort of things? Everything from a Daishonin Buddhist indoctrination session to a wine party in the alley behind what would then have been called a colored grocery store.

Thinking about these incidents, I am reminded of Kenneth Patchen's "shy pornographer" whose last name was Budd. Anytime he heard someone call out, "Got a match, bud?" he assumed it was someone who knew him. In his case, innocence brought him fame and fortune as the only pornographer who had never written a dirty word. His publisher inserted a lot of asterisks and exclamation marks—presumptive expletives deleted—into the text of his otherwise entirely wholesome Perry Mason novel. I know the feeling. There are professional conservatives in Washington who work overtime to find subliminal hate messages by reading *Chronicles* backward at a lower speed.

I used to have a friend who was an absolute paragon of passivity. He would spend days dreaming up perfect book titles, without ever getting around to writing even the first sentence. He did once conceive of a whole book project on American assassins and went so far as to look up the newspaper files on McKinley and Garfield. We went to the library and checked out the stories in the encyclopedias and

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history books, and I learned something important about American scholarship: hardly anyone does any work. Nearly every account described Garfield's assassin, Charles Guiteau, as a "disappointed office seeker." "I am a Republican stalwart," he exclaimed as he fired upon Garfield, who had been elected as virtually the only honest man in the GOP. How things have changed. Leon Czolgosz, on the other hand, the murderer of William McKinley, is always "an anarchist enflamed by the doctrines of Emma Goldman." It was enough to make you lose heart in a project, more than enough for Pasquale, who rarely finished anything longer than a sonnet, albeit often a good sonnet.

For all the trouble he got into as a result of a growing affection for the bottle, Pasquale retained an innocence about other people that it was hard not to admire, and when he was sober he could talk wonderfully about the things he had seen when he was drunk. Most of us either cannot remember or would rather not. Fitzgerald says somewhere that people who are amused by a drunk the night before always take it out on him the day after, because they resent the honesty he had enjoyed under the influence. Perhaps, as Fitzgerald got older, people were a great deal less amused by his "honesty" than he realized, but he had a point, and perhaps our fear of honesty, of seeing things as they are, explains the new temperance crusade being waged by America's ruling class. Gorbachev knows that drunkenness and shirking are forms of counterrevolution that put *glasnost* and *perestroika* to shame. "Wine," said Alcaeus, "is a peep-hole into the soul." Small wonder that the Congress of the United States would like to levy an outrageous tax on beer, the workingman's wine.

Peace is not the natural condition of human life, and for most of us these moments are rarer than an uncloudy day. Peace is, however, another name for the land of heart's desire.

Pasquale was half Italian, half North Carolinian — not a good combination for a man who expected to make his way in the world. Since the invention of air conditioning, the Italians and American Southerners have shown a great capacity for enterprise, but both peoples are still sufficiently civilized to spend half their time eating and drinking, living. In his wonderful book on James Johnston Pettigrew, Clyde Wilson describes Pettigrew's reaction as he travels from Germany through France down to Italy. As the North Carolinian passes into Italy, he recorded in his diary that it was like coming home.

In much of Italy, as in Charleston, where Pettigrew practiced law, businessmen and lawyers still knock off for several hours in the heat of the day, to eat or drink or lay around in the shade. This habit of doing nothing is a valuable trait that most of us have lost, along with the habit of reflection and the sense of honor. I sometimes think I am better occupied in staring out the window, my mental screen gone blank or showing at most a test pattern, than in any strenuous mental exercise. I know that it is only after I have been able to afford such a luxury that I am capable of thinking or writing something better than editorial copy. When one of my colleagues caught me at such a moment, he quipped: "What do you think this is, a think tank?"

Nathaniel West, in his most depressing book, *The Day of the Locust*, has unintentionally captured what I am trying to describe. A burnt-out simple man moves to California and rents a house. He spends most of his time keeping house and sitting out in an old deck chair he finds in the yard:

> There was a much better view to be had in any direction other than the one he faced. By moving his chair in a quarter circle he could have seen a large part of the canyon twisting down to the city below. He never thought of making this shift. From where he sat, he saw the closed door of the garage and a patch of its shabby, tarpaper roof. In the foreground was a sooty, brick incinerator and a pile of rusty cans. A little to the right of them were the remains of a cactus garden in which a few ragged, tortured plants still survived.

Not much of a view, to be sure, although one wonders what a Dutch or Flemish painter might have made out of it. Proust's Bergotte (modeled on Anatole France) dies exclaiming over a little patch of yellow wall he had just seen in a Vermeer painting. Although West himself takes the opportunity to display his wonderfully clear prose, his character concentrates on the drama of a lizard catching flies. While rooting for the flies, he never interferes. The novelist obviously meant his character as a savage comment upon a class of Middle Americans he neither liked nor understood, but I would prefer to take the poor fellow as a kind of sage who has learned to be content with his lot.

This sort of Stoical acceptance of life as it comes has nothing in common with the Buddhist tales of the prince who left his family and friends in order to find peace as a ferryman. The only Oriental parallel that comes to mind is the Taoist parable of the ruler who wanted to abdicate his throne in favor of a wise counselor. The wise man refuses the honor, explaining that each man has his station in life. If the cook abandoned the kitchen, he adds, the priests would not quit their duties and take his place. Everyone, so the Taoist texts preach, must learn to make the best of his situation in life, even if we find ourselves burdened — like the Emperor Marcus — with the responsibilities of empire.

One more example to illustrate my Taoism for losers. A college prank, when I was 17, led to a very minor brush with the law. The kindly Charleston police had a good time threatening me with 15 years in jail and — worse — a night in the "blue room" where they put the drunks, homosexuals, and degenerates. This was no idle threat, by the way, since a year or so later some poor fellow passing through found himself in the county jail, because he couldn't pay a traffic ticket. Despite his many notes smuggled out to the guards — who only laughed as they crumpled them up and tossed them away — he was held captive by homosexual prisoners and repeatedly, continuously abused.

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I had heard enough tales to be uncomfortable at the thought of a night in jail. One of the policemen at the station turned out to be a decent man who patrolled the beat where many of my friends lived, and he insisted that I be put in a solitary cell. As the door clanged shut, all I could think of was the terrible disgrace, the shame that would be brought on my family, my whole life ruined. You know how adolescents are wont to brood, and I was worse than most, but gradually a sense of peace descended. Since there was nothing, after all, that I could do about anything, there was no point to worrying. My mind went blank and the next thing I remember is being awakened by the voices of friends who had come to bail me out.

In the end, this ruinous experience cost a total of thirty dollars. Our director of student affairs, a fine old man named Willard Silcox, who had no particular fondness for me, kept it out of the papers. So far as I ever could find out, my parents never heard about it, and even if they had, they would undoubtedly have laughed about the incident. Over the years, the whole thing has been polished into an anecdote that takes at least fifteen minutes to tell. The story is so good that I don't think I can any longer distinguish the true details of "an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative" from the "artistic verisimilitude" it has accumulated. What I do recall quite clearly is the moment of peace that opened up like the broad blue sky after a day of rain.

Peace is not the natural condition of human life, and for most of us these moments are rarer than an uncloudy day. Peace is, however, another name for the land of heart's desire; it is the condition of being at home — not in this alien universe of things and forces — but in that other world of which we have glimpses from time to time in dreams and myths and poems that are like mirages of oases and cities: they are not real in the desert where they appear, where the only reality is sand and blistering heat. But somewhere we may never go there is a real city, a real oasis where weary travelers refresh themselves with pure clear water. In the meantime there is "the peace of God that passeth understanding." ◈

Sleepwalker

by Dabney Stuart

The questionable old man wanders
the refuse dump, the railroad yards
in his head, deserted, gets out of bed,
traverses the room, goes down the stairs,
his pajama shirttail flapping,
the thin cotton pressing his legs.
Look at that shin — razor sharp:
barefoot to the wind, no more regard.
I meet him coming
out of the front door at midnight.
He points his finger at the moon,
pulls the trigger. I ask him
where he's going. "Off," he says.
The upstairs bedroom sucks at him
through its open window, a vacuum cleaner;
his hair flows toward it. He lifts
his arms, grabs a low branch of the maple,
hauls himself up. Moonbird,
limbnestle. The tree vibrates
from the suction. At its top finally,
he hooks his toes into the ruff,
flaps his arms, flies with the tree
his wake, gone. The bedroom window
shudders, a mouth moaning.
I sit down in the great rootgap
his takeoff has left me, his will,
hoping to die in such arms.

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Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Life in the Happy Valley

by Katherine Dalton

My friend Dr. Bob grew up in a coal town called Packard in eastern Kentucky, a place that was abandoned years ago. All that is left these days is kudzu growing over old foundations. He's a neurosurgeon in Louisville now, and an amateur Kentucky historian, and my favorite tale of his is about the blue Fugetts and the blind Fugetts. The Fugetts live in Letcher county, and like so many families isolated in a rural area they have in-bred a bit and linked up two sets of bad genes. One branch starts going blind in their 30's and 40's—well after they've had their quota of kids—and the other has a blood condition (methemoglobinemia) that prevents them from getting sufficient oxygen, rendering the poor Fugett distinctly blue. When it's cold or the Fugett is stressed he is really blue. It's got to be so bad that nobody hardly will marry them, and so some of the family have moved over one county to Perry, and changed their name I think to Thompson. Not that this has helped a lot; now there are blue Fugetts and blind Thompsons.

Growing up in Kentucky as I did, I heard a lot of stories like that. Wolfe County, in the beautiful Red River Gorge area in the center of the state, had or maybe still has the highest incidence of schizophrenia (which is a genetically linked disease) per capita in the world, because the same gorge that now attracts the backpackers further isolated families in an area where isolation was already great, and some ancestor had a bad gene. Every or nearly every family in that county has at least one case of that affliction. My same friend Dr. Bob was out there visiting the gorge one day years ago with his wife and two young boys, when a beat-up station wagon pulled up beside them at a lookout point. Dr. Bob took one glance at the locals and quietly ordered his family to get back in their car. The folks in the station wagon were each one of them, he says, mad as hatters.

I'm telling you all this not because (or not only because) I have that typically Southern ghoulish pride in the distinctiveness of home, even if home is distinguished in its disease, but because there is always another side, even to such a problem as in-breeding. What people forget when they talk about the downside of marrying your first cousin, envisioning as they do the *idiot savant* banjo picker in *Deliverance*, is that just as in-breeding can group together weak genes or bad genes and give you terrible problems, so can it link up good genes.

Katherine Dalton is the managing editor of Chronicles.

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Up until recently the scholar's prize at Eastern Kentucky University went year after year to some young man from a poor and tiny backwoods holler. Many of these kids were from in-bred families—and it's not that I'm recommending we follow the practices of the ancient kings of Egypt, but there you are. I have sometimes wondered if the legends of fairy changelings weren't based on these families that, full of dull brothers, inexplicably, out of seemingly terrible materials, produce a brilliant or beautiful child. Brilliance among a family of hardscrabble farmers may be something of a curse, but still, such genetic favors remind you that where there's life there's hope.

And if I may continue the family discussion here for a minute, hope and the happiness that is hope are always personal. These days, as perhaps it has been most days, the big picture is not looking too bright. What national good news there is consists of demonstrating that the bad news is over-reported. It's not true, for example, that your young friends who are marrying each other next week have a one-in-two chance of getting divorced. Fifty percent of all marriages fail in this country, but not 50 percent of all first marriages; the success rate for those is about 62 percent. It's the repeaters, the Elizabeth Taylors, who drive the general rate down to one in two. So while the marriage vow is in trouble it's not as bad as it's painted.

Likewise, as I think has been better reported in the last year or so, the modern middle-class terror that one's child is likely to be abducted by a stranger is largely a myth. According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, only about 3.8 percent of the 25,000 missing or abducted children they've counted since 1984 were stolen by strangers. (About 39 percent have been taken by a relative, usually because of a custody dispute, and the remaining 57 percent are runaways or otherwise lost.) If you are not a hemophiliac, a prostitute, a male homosexual, or an IV drug user, the likelihood of your getting AIDS is small. The often-quoted 60 percent figure—that 60 percent of those sick with AIDS had it from heterosexual contact—is a worldwide figure, and may have a great deal to do with the generally overtaxed immune systems of the Third World and, in some places, a very different style in intimate relations from what might be considered average in middle-class America. Again, I'm not saying you shouldn't worry about your children, or that we're a healthy country, just that for most of us those two worries should be low on our list.

This may be cold comfort for some of my friends, especially those who are a good bit my elder, who tell me (as Gore Vidal has pointed out very evocatively) that they can remember when this was a freer country, and when they could read the newspaper without throwing it in despair or anger across the room; the only response I can think of is something George Garrett quotes his wife as saying: that there is no such thing as public life, there is only private life. With regard to that tossed newspaper, unless that's our family in the Scene section, or our company on the Business page, or our neighbor's son in Sports, the world of the *Courier-Journal* is not a world that for us exists. This means modern life is much too fragmented, that we would have such tenuous ties to our neighbors around town; but when times are not so good fragmentation can also be a refuge. Trying to think of some good news for this issue what kept coming to mind was friends' new children and family weddings and Maria passing her medical boards; partly, yes, because there is little good news out of Washington or Chicago or even Rockford's City Hall, but mostly because the world of my friends and extended family is the world that I live in. And in this I'm hardly unique.

Even moving to the world at large, the good news is always local, and the best people often localists. Take Bill Kauffman's favorite politician, John McClaughry of Vermont, or Dick Lamm of Colorado, who as his reward for bucking the national trend in health care received a good deal of slander from his state press (though he may live to see national opinion swing around). Or take John Lukacs, a Hungarian expatriate historian living in Pennsylvania, who despite every excuse of birth and education for being a cosmopolitan internationalist, is one of the more eloquent nationalists (in all positive senses of the word) we have. Or take Tom Murray, a Scot poet living near the Firth of Clyde, who writes in the very individualized voice of a widower with the same universal authority Larkin had, or Brendan Galvin in Connecticut, whose most recent book of poetry is a series of monologues by a fictional 18th-century New Englander, metered local history. The world is full of junk, but it is full of these people too, and if the nightly news or the National Book Awards are getting you down, you are missing the trees for the forest.

We live in a world ruled by paradox. There is oppression in every victory and opportunity in most every disaster, and sometimes even when the big picture looks good—*because* it looks good—it can get depressing. Going up East to a high-intensity college as I did I saw so many people who were suffering from what critic Harold Bloom calls the "Agony of Influence," or what non-Freudian nonacademics used to call achievement anxiety and sophomore slump: it has all been done; there is nothing left to contribute, or least I'm not capable of it; I am just some turkey wading through an English (French, History) major and will never be Milton (or Molière or Thucydides) or anything close. I used to wonder if a lot of the most self-promoting twenty-year-old poets in my college didn't feel this way, a prize from the department going a long way to make up for a hidden anxiousness, and the anxiety being the cause of so much of the self-promotion in the first place. And I wondered because I saw some succumb—like the art major who jumped off the top of the Art & Architecture building, a reminder to the poor folks who had to clean her up that suicide is not only a desperate and pitiable but a furiously selfish act.

The best answer to this kind of self-absorbed teenage depression is not the one the Yale English Department generally gives, which is to shower praise for bad writing on young people who are generally smart enough to recognize baloney even when it is flattering baloney. The best answer is to point to people like Margaret Morse Nice. Margaret Nice was essentially a housewife, who for eight years during the 20's and 30's spent two hours a day in Columbus, Ohio, watching the song sparrows in her large backyard. The observations she recorded in *The Watcher at the Nest* and her two-volume study of the sparrow made her one of the

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great ornithologists of the century. Or look at the more famous J. Henri Fabre, the son of small farmers in Provence, who recognized in the imperfect observations of the wasp Cerceris by Léon Dufour an opportunity for entomological study that he was to pursue his whole life, despite a large family, little money and little free time; his assistant professorship at Avignon paid so badly he had to take on extra lessons, even after being inducted into the Legion d'Honneur. But he like Mrs. Nice made use of his backyard.

Those of us wise enough to cultivate our own gardens will find we have plenty to do. As Lytton Strachey observed, this advice of Voltaire's is one of the very few pieces of practical wisdom ever uttered by a philosopher—philosophers being a group that generally deserts the concrete for the universal. But for writers or rulers, businessmen or entomologists, it is the undiluted specific at your elbow that always has the greatest lessons to teach, not the watered down generalism; after all, the first is the root of the second. If Machiavelli had written general tracts on government, distilling the lessons he'd learned from Florence but leaving the Florentine examples out, he would not be as convincing. The experiment proves the hypothesis, not the other way around. It's not just that the good news is at your elbow, but all news.

Woody Allen says somewhere, "I'm astounded by people who want to 'know' the universe when it's hard enough to find your way around Chinatown." What we have to be optimistic about, as anybody who's lived in New York can tell you, is that it is possible—just—to know Chinatown. Hence not only is it necessary to work your garden, but much more importantly *it can be done*—something those of us striving to recreate the Garden of Eden forget at our peril. I am not arguing against ambition, or even against ambitions that are too large, only against the human tendency to despair of doing anything when we cannot do it all. What is left for an idealist whose forty years of toil in the vineyards of world peace have not improved so much as the block he lives on but a nihilistic old age? And the unavoidable disappointments of old age are tough enough.

Sam Johnson's Rasselas, prince of Abisinnia, leaves the Happy Valley in which he has been anything but to search for happiness and wisdom in the world at large. In Johnson's final chapter, "The Conclusion, in Which Nothing Is Concluded," Rasselas speaks of the kingdom he would like to rule, his sister of the women's college she would like to found, and the lady Pekuah of the abbey over which she wants to be prioress. "Of these wishes that they had formed they well knew that none could be obtained," Johnson finishes. "They deliberated a while what was to be done, and resolved, when the inundation should cease, to return to Abissinia." Rasselas has found the same answer as Candide, and it is not much of an answer as far as revelations are supposed to go. But it is all the answer we are allowed to have.

For Goodness' Sake

by Dabney Stuart

The last of my fathers lies
tubed and propped
under an oxygen tent.
He's dressed for the moon,
or just come back
a solo trip his heart
won't let him repeat.
The plaque on the door says
I.C.U.
Knock Before Entering
Do Not Enter.
I've heard all that all
my life, and still
wonder who sees me, who knows
when I am sleeping.
Santa Claus isn't here—
there's no sign of anyone
here but us. I knock
and do not enter,
look through the square
double-paned porthole
in the door, wipe
my breath off the glass.
He must think I am
waving, because he waves back,
or is he just brushing
mist from the tent?
His life appears
beside me, looking fit,
remarkably like he did
just yesterday. No one
else could make it
through this little window,
but he does—Old Belly-
laugh himself doesn't go
down the chimney with more
grace. He fades
into the tent as if nothing
has happened. The I.V.
silently drips;
the small dot on the monitor
lights its row
of miniature rooftops,
marking a song without words.

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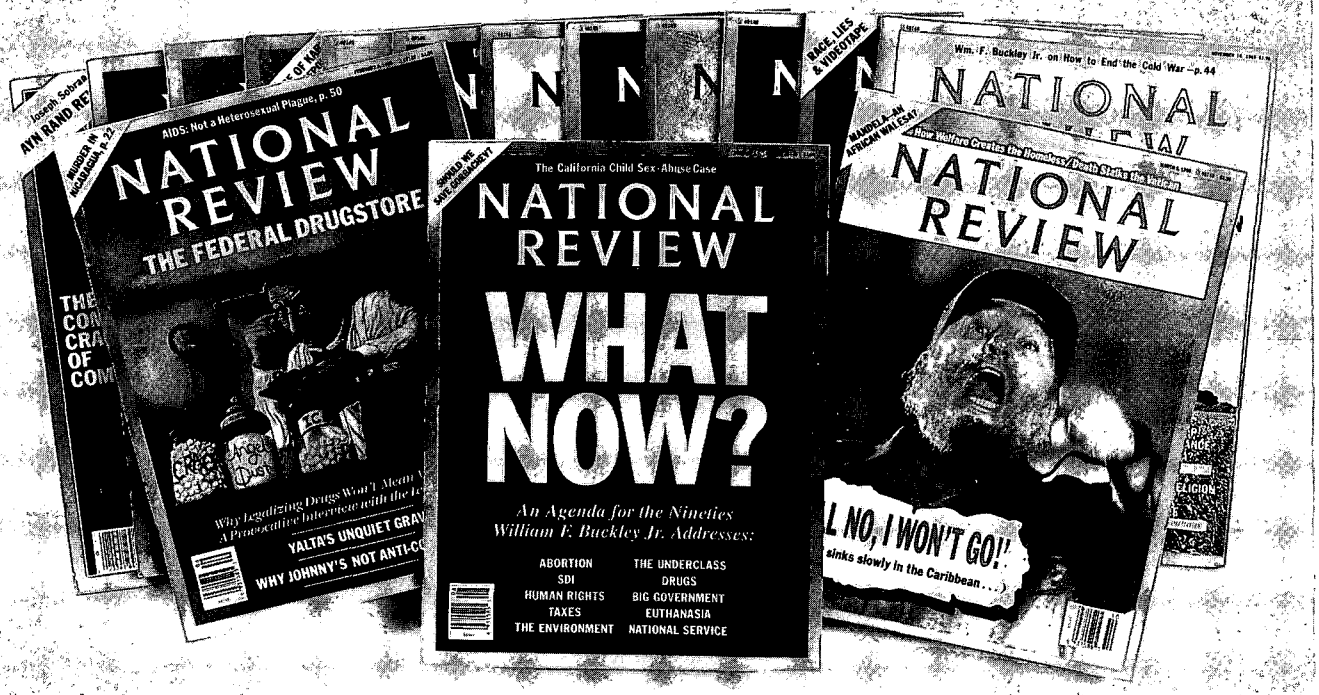

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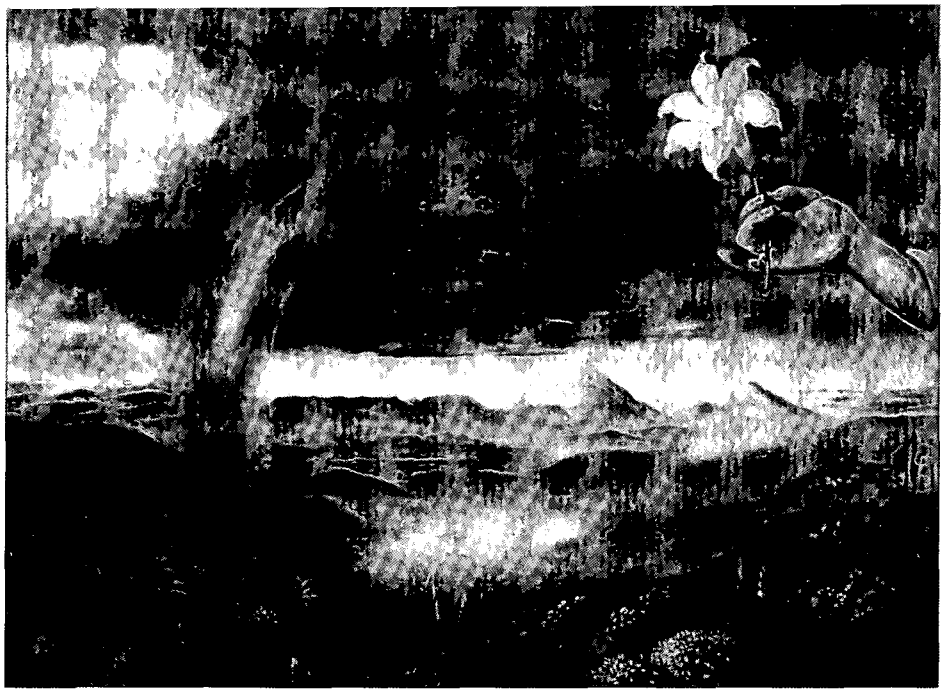

Emilia Fitz

GOOD NEWS

GOOD NEWS BLUES
by George Garrett

What I started to say, my original impulse, was wrong. Not all wrong, but, anyway, riddled with error and inconsistency. I started to say this: that in many ways, speaking (as we one and all must) from my own limited angle, my assigned point of view, the times we seem to be in and likely to live on into are about as bleak and discouraging, if not demoralizing as any in this century. This brutal, bloody century fueled by falsehoods, lit by the distorting illumination of inhuman abstractions. The operative, key word is the third one in the series of modifiers—*demoralizing*. We have been through bleaker and more discouraging times—the Great Depression, the string of wars, large and small, during which we, individually and as a people, were not demoralized. Not even greatly dispirited. We found then that we had things, courage and endurance and patience and an honorable, unsentimental compassion, that we seem to have lost in the easier times that have followed. I was going to say that what argues against the rigidity of simple and secular despair has been the solid proof, the irrefutable evidence that the unexpected can occur in spite of all strategies, systems, analysis. . . . *Item*: Two years ago there was a steady parade of left-wing British scholars (whose accents we do so love to listen to) who came to and through the place I work (Virginia) proclaiming the decline and demise of these United States and holding up as an example of the ideal modern state and society, combining equity and liberty (you already guessed, didn't you?), the G.D.R.! In passing, the Ortega brothers, in their tailored uniforms and designer eyeglasses, were held up as model popular leaders for the inevitable and inescapable future we deserved. Who could have imagined that by here and now the last diehard totalitarianism Marxist places would be islands of ignorance like North Korea, Vietnam, Albania (and even these are changing every day, groaning now with change for a change)? And, of course, a few last privileged bastions, like the last of England's crumbling stately homes, of disingenuous disinformation. Like (a mere obvious example among some others) the Duke University English Department.

I was going to say that, but I realized it wasn't true. There were people, intelligent and thoughtful people, not magicians, who predicted precisely what has come to pass. One of these was René Dubos whom I heard, more than a decade ago, describe the breakup of the Eastern Empire and the Eastern Bloc as it has, in fact, happened. I should add that he predicted other breakups too, large and small, from larger to smaller, almost everywhere except here in the United States where our freedom of choice and of mobility would probably hold us together.

I wish I had time and space to tell you some of the other things he reasonably predicted. Because most of them were good news. They would cheer you up. One will have to do.

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Arguing persuasively that the earth, thus the environment, is neither fragile in any way nor even greatly threatened, he was entirely convincing that we would solve many besetting environmental problems much sooner than anyone, most of all so-called environmentalists, can imagine. Remember how they all said, in their received wisdom, it would take a century or more to "save" Lake Erie?

And there were others besides Dubos, some of them darker and deeper voices like Solzhenitsyn.

I would have to say the fortunate surprises of these late times in the century were not at all unanticipated. But I would also have to say that not many of us had the imagination or good sense to listen to the voices of truth then, especially with the systematic, often grotesque distortion and reduction even of the simplest information that appear to be inherently a part of all our futile efforts at communicating with each other.

We could have taken heart long ago had anyone encouraged us to seek and find the truth.

The bad news is that nothing much has changed in our ways and means of speaking to each other.

The good news, as I see it, is that some prophets, speaking and thinking against the grain, have been right when official sages and flacks have been dead wrong. And I am willing to bet everything there is that there are voices worth listening to even now, speaking to all of us and likely to be heard by a few, the precious few, who are willing to listen and to learn. ◈

George Garrett is Henry Hoyns Professor of English at the University of Virginia. His latest novel, Entered From the Sun, *is reviewed in this issue.*

WORSHIPING THE CLOUDS

by E. Christian Kopff

"Why should I dance?" the chorus of Sophocles' *Oedipus* asks at the heart of that great tragedy. Queen Jocasta has proclaimed the futility of divine prophecy. Apollo, or his human servants, said that her husband would die at their son's hands, but he met no such fate. The chorus is bothered. If the oracles are not true, what order is left in life? "Why should I dance?" The play will end in horror and shame, but in the midst of that horror, it affirms a divine order, in which humans play a much smaller role than their desires suggest.

The good news for the people of the United States and their children is that reality—economic, political, and moral—exists. We have allowed foreigners to buy out or undersell our economy and to flood into our nation and drive Americans out of job after job. We have allowed our children to grow up monoglot ignoramuses, incapable of planning for the future or competing in the present. Our leadership is the most corrupt and immoral in history: embezzlers, murderers, and rapists. We appoint and hire based on race, sex, and unproven incompetence, but not on the basis of objective accomplishment. We owe more than we can repay, and we have no intention of trying to repay what we owe. In fact, we plan to keep on borrowing.

Like Oedipus, we will soon learn that we are human, subject to the laws of nature and of nature's God. We will go bankrupt. Our businesses and universities will close. Our children will be unable to compete. The wealth and power of the world will go, has gone elsewhere, to Japan and to Europe. In the short run, this will not seem good news. That our children will be poor and never see the inside of a university, that they will not know the wealth and glamour that some of us have glimpsed, that the American century will end not in a long bright sunset, but with a pop, like a poorly cooked soufflé, may seem depressing at first.

There are the obvious superficial benefits. The parasites will stop governing and judging us and move on to other prey. The misfits of other societies will leave ours and go elsewhere. (Not back where they came from—no one wants them there—but elsewhere.) Our children will be no more ignorant than they are now. Spared the easy A's showered on them by the Great Teachers to whom they award A's in their teaching evaluations, the educable among them may start to study and learn again, when they discover that blear-eyed wisdom is born out of midnight oil.

More than that, we will live again in the real world of limits and boundaries, where tragedy and creativity will again be possible. We will come to know the will of the Creator who made the world in a certain fashion and not in another. We have lived too long worshiping the clouds of Aristophanes' great play, the divinities who assume whatever shape you want. They do not create us, these goddesses of the art of persuasion, call it rhetoric as advertising. They are made in our image. Female created we them. They "empower" children by giving A's to students who have learned nothing. They console those limited in life by intelligence or hormones or sloth with the siren song that they are "victims" of an unjust world. Like Strepsiades in *Clouds*, we thought we would not have to pay our debts and that our sons could prosper without the religion and mores of our nation.

Bankruptcy, when it comes, will leave us poor, but also secure in the knowledge that there is a God and He is just. The sight of Oedipus when he has learned who he really is may frighten us, as we gaze on his bloody mask, but it also tells us that the oracles are true. The justice of Zeus is not the good life we promised ourselves, but it rules a world that makes moral sense, which we cannot twist into a pleasing shape out of selfishness and sentimentality. As we slowly begin to put our lives and those of our children and our nation back together again, we may hear music. It is the chorus, beginning its dance. ◈

E. Christian Kopff teaches Greek and Latin at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

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KICK IT AS IT LAYS

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

I was drinking a whiskey at the Frontier Saloon in Frontier, Wyoming, a couple of nights ago when my host mentioned a report he had watched on CNN regarding the desperate plight of New York City and the depths to which it has plummeted. Thirty—even twenty—years ago, ambitious Americans, whether born and bred in Dallas, Texas, or Bismarck, North Dakota, thought of the place in breathlessly romantic terms similar to those effused during the 1920's and 30's by Thomas Wolfe, a native of Ashville, North Carolina, who had gone north to Gotham in search of literary fame, fortune, and the love of beautiful women. Today, CNN said, New York City is no longer the mecca, the alpha and omega, for on-the-make Americans—it simply isn't worth the inconvenience, the unpleasantness, and the physical danger of living there. A moment's reflection on my part confirmed that this was indeed the brightest piece of news concerning the state of America and American culture that I had heard in many moons. So defying the sin-taxers in particular and the New American Puritanism in general, I had another whiskey-on-the-rocks to celebrate it.

Since 1975, when President Ford refused to allocate federal funds for the purpose of bailing New York out of richly deserved bankruptcy and the New York *Daily News* responded with a now-famous headline ("FORD TO NEW YORK: DROP DEAD"), the city has generated nearly as much self-worshipful propaganda as it has groundbreaking social, cultural, hygienic, and political pathologies in what might be alternately viewed as either a pathetic or a disgusting attempt to restore its national—indeed its international—image. Before 1975 New York had been too proud to engage in that sort of organized self-puffery—meaning, of course, that it didn't need to. That is not to say, however, that its reputation as both the apex and the engine of American civilization was a deserved one; in fact, the city has probably not been a fit place for civilized Americans to reside since before the Civil War, although—until recently at least—rich Americans have always been able to live well there, as anywhere.

The New York Mystique was based on the notion that the city was "cosmopolitan"—unlike the rest of the United States that was, by implication, "provincial." There is truth in that notion, to the extent that heartland Americans have never particularly *wanted* to be "cosmopolitan"; that they were not in the early days of the Republic "cosmopolitan"; and that today the United States, although it is culturally speaking the primary global influence, is still nevertheless not "cosmopolitan." This has to do in part with the fact of the American hinterland having retained to this day so much of its original skepticism toward Europe and the rest of the world, in part with the fact that the consolidation of the "global village" has resulted in a marked decline, rather than in an increase, in cosmopolitanism. What America *was* and *is*, is *pluralistic*; but it was pluralistic not because it especially wished to be so, but because that was how history turned out for it. The modern fetish of "pluralism," therefore, was left to the kind of people who choose to inhabit such places as Washington, D.C., New York City, and Boston, for whom "pluralism" came to be indistinguishable from "cosmopolitanism"—which, of course, it most certainly is not. The extreme—really, the nearly pathological—degree to which this fetish has been sentimentalized was illustrated by the centennial anniversary celebration of the Statue of Liberty in New York several years ago: a celebration that did not require the presence of Henry James to reveal it for what it was, namely, a vulgar politicized indulgence from which every element of cosmopolitan taste was conspicuously absent. For weeks, sentimentalists hailed millions of immigrants for having themselves been hailed by the upswept torch of Ms. Liberty while ignoring completely the fact that large numbers of these people-from-many-lands carried within them, like undeclared horticultural imports, the seeds of what would later blossom as what Joseph Sobran has so aptly and wittily called "alienism"—a species of hostility toward historical America and everything America used to stand for that has contributed mightily to the destruction of New York City, and that is currently engaged in a strong bid to ruin the nation as well. "It used to be a joke here," a New York publisher explained to me last summer, "to say that New York was becoming a Third World City. Well, now it isn't a joke any longer. It's a fact." Actually, New York is not a Third World City either, anymore than it is that mystical microcosm of the pluralistic society that its progressively-minded boosters like to praise it for being. Today, New York has gone beyond not just cosmopolitanism but culture itself—anthropological culture I mean, not the Whitney Museum and Haitian street fairs. Almost, New York has gone beyond humanity. It could quite accurately be called a zoo, were it not for the fact that so few of its denizens are behind bars.

The 1980's witnessed the demise of the ideology of Marxist-Leninism and perhaps, through the continuing collapse of New York City, the 1990's will see the end in America of the ideology of the Global Melting Pot, known otherwise as the Towers of Babel. So at least we are entitled to hope. Meantime, the I LOVE NEW YORK types will prate endlessly to anyone who will listen about the wide variety of international cuisines available throughout their city; even as what in better days used to be referred to as "the national letters" are made, year by year, less available and still less contributed to by the American publishing industry that—once upon a time—was Gotham's unquestionable and invaluable contribution to a larger American culture.

Chilton Williamson, Jr. is senior editor for books at Chronicles, *and the author of, most recently,* The Homestead, *a novel.*

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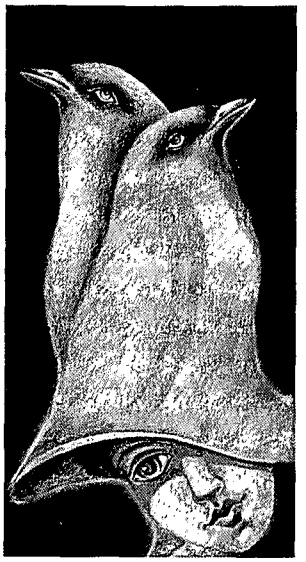
WHERE THE CATTLE ARE FAT . . .

by Jane Greer



The good news for Linton, North Dakota, is not that things have improved but that someone with clout has finally noticed how good things have *always* been.

Most of Linton's residents were born there, 65 miles southeast of Bismarck. Lots of people have left over the years, and *no* one ever moves *to* Linton except by marriage—that is, until two years ago when Hal Rosenbluth discovered the town. The Upper Midwest work ethic and the computer age have combined to put Linton back on the map.

Rosenbluth is the thirty-seven-year-old CEO of Rosenbluth Travel, a Philadelphia-based agency variously cited as being either the third- or fourth-largest in the United States. It was started as a steamship ticket office by Rosenbluth's grandfather in 1892, and that year had billings of $20 million. Rosenbluth went to work for the company in 1974, and after a year, bored with the vice presidency, he went to work as one of the company's reservation agents, where he shaped most of his ideas on management. Ninety-eight years after its founding, the agency's yearly billings top $1.1 billion. Excellence expert Tom Peters gave the agency his "Service Company of the Year" award in 1988.

Rosenbluth Travel has offices in 160 cities, including London and Singapore. The smallest *had* been Ponca City, Oklahoma, population 26,000—before Linton, whose population during the 1980's fell sharply from its 1980 figure of 1,561.

At first, Rosenbluth was just trying to help the drought-stricken Midwestern farmers he kept reading about during the summer of 1988. The U.S. Agriculture Department steered Rosenbluth's offer of help toward North Dakota, where state officials told him Emmons County was the worst-hit. The philanthropist decided to bring some temporary part-time jobs to Linton, and hired 40 Lintonites to do electronic data processing at five dollars an hour. To some farm wives, a job with Rosenbluth's agency was the happy alternative to losing the farm or looking for and commuting to a job an hour away in Bismarck.

Then the Linton Industrial Development Corporation—which hadn't previously had a lot of lucky breaks—decided to pull out all the stops in persuading Rosenbluth to stay. The LIDC paid the first two months' rent on a former farm implement building for the temporary workers, and started a formal letter-writing campaign to Rosenbluth's Philadelphia office.

The courtship worked. The part-time temporary jobs became full-time, with benefits. A phone company fiber-optics line was installed. Rosenbluth Travel started bringing planefuls of executives to Linton for training and planning meetings, and the excess spilling over into motel rooms in Wishek, population 1,300, 33 miles from Linton. And Rosenbluth is building a 20-bedroom chateau on 308 acres overlooking the Missouri River, 13 miles west of Linton. The chateau will be used as an executive retreat, conference center, and training center for Rosenbluth employees and clients. Canoeing, fishing, hunting, trail rides, and a "working mini-farm" will help high-pressure city execs ease their stress. The chateau staff will be made up of locals, and most of the building materials and furnishings bought locally.

It may sound like Hal Rosenbluth wears a halo, but he's the first to admit that Linton has been good for him, too. "A major plus is the people—their work ethic, their education, their sincerity, their willingness," he told the *Bismarck Tribune*. "These are things we have had within our company for years, but they're drying up in the big cities. Other companies are constantly complaining, 'We can't find good people.' They're looking in the wrong place, that's all."

Perhaps the only *bad* news to come out of the Rosenbluth deal was that this past April he asked Linton kids to find a new town motto. "Where the cattle are fat and the fish are floppin'" just didn't seem to fit the image of a hotbed of economic development. Linton Chamber of Commerce president Vince Watkins wanted something "a little more sophisticated, but still with a hint of the rural" (a hint of the rural being what one gets when one stands downwind of the aforementioned cattle). Even radio commentator Paul Harvey got into the act, providing his audience with statistics about this "real nice town" in, of all places, "*South* Dakota." Watkins got calls from disc jockeys and talk show hosts in Las Vegas, Honolulu, and Boston, all of them wanting to poke fun at Linton, but he did his best to use it to the town's advantage.

The new motto, culled from dozens of entries: "Preserving the past and working for the future." *Zzzzzzzzzz*. I much prefer the one mailed in from Kansas by a man who heard that Linton has six places of worship and five watering holes:

"Fill the churches,
Empty the bars.
Linton, North Dakota,
Will shine like the stars."

Jane Greer lives in Bismarck, North Dakota.

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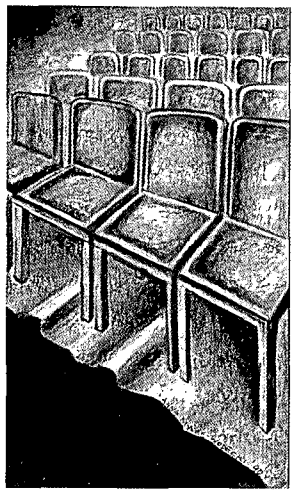
THROWING THE RASCALS OUT
by Odie B. Faulk



Note September 18, 1990, as a historic date. On that fateful Tuesday, people in the Sooner State stuck their heads out their windows and, in that great line from *Network*, shouted at politicians, *"We're mad as Hell, and we're not going to take it anymore."*

The object of this anger was politicians entrenched in office and seemingly impossible to dislodge through the normal election process, politicians who use lobbyist dollars as well as numerous self-voted tax monies to push their reelection campaigns. According to numerous sources, 98 percent of congressional incumbents seeking reelection are returned to Congress every year, and those holding state offices are not far behind.

That percentage will change for politicians in the state legislature of Oklahoma thanks to oil man Lloyd Noble II. He spent thousands of his own dollars to finance an initiative petition to limit Sooner legislators to 12 years in office: six two-year terms for members of the House and three four-year terms for senators. The 12-year limit begins on January 1, 1991, meaning anyone serving on that date will have to retire from office by December 31, 2002.

Those who volunteered to circulate these petitions were not partisan; Democrats vied with Republicans for the honor. These hundreds of volunteers fanned out across the state last spring—to find that getting the necessary signatures of more than one hundred fifty thousand voters was remarkably easy. One angry citizen gave voice to the feelings of thousands when he said about politicians, during a "man on the street" interview for a television news show, "It's time to send them all home."

Naturally those politicians long entrenched at the statehouse in Oklahoma City, as well as those who aspire someday to win office, thundered that this initiative would be bad legislation. "Experience counts," was the gist of their argument, but a majority of Oklahomans seemed to agree with another angry voter who shouted at one political rally, "Experience counts in learning to feather your own nest."

Despite cries about the value of experience and seniority, Oklahomans by a vote of 436,347 to 212,318 passed this legislation that, because it originated through the initiative process, was not subject to the governor's veto. The morning after the vote State Senator Ben Brown (D-Oklahoma City) told a reporter, "This is an effort by the rich and powerful to take away the rights of the ordinary citizen," explaining that this law denied voters the right to choose their legislators regardless of the number of years they had served. John P. Keast of the Free Congress Foundation in Washington, D.C., viewed the outcome differently. When informed of the vote, he said, "This is democracy in action. Oklahomans recaptured their legislature."

Since that fateful vote on September 18, various pundits have waxed in print about this legislation. David Broder of the *Washington Post* argued in a nationally syndicated column that the result would be an increase in the power of legislative staffs, those faceless bureaucrats who haunt the halls of power and who work their own agenda. Thus to limit the terms of congressmen and senators would bring about less democracy, not more. Others have said that state legislators should not be the object of such time limitation because most of them do not serve long before aspiring to higher office. A political scientist making this argument noted that two-thirds of the legislators in Oklahoma have been in office less than 12 years.

Yet a start must be made somewhere to "throw the rascals out," and the Oklahoma vote is a beginning. It doubtless is true, as some critics argue, that this law is imperfect. However, it is inspiring movements in other states. Moreover, the Free Congress Foundation is trying to do at the national level what Oklahomans did at the state level. It is coordinating an effort to limit congressmen and senators to 12 years—and polls conducted for the *Washington Post* and ABC News show that 70 percent of Americans support a limitation on congressional terms.

Perhaps on September 18, Oklahoma's voters metaphorically tossed a few bales of tea into a presently murky legislative harbor, the start of a revolution to throw out life-tenured politicians and to return to the Jeffersonian ideal of citizen-lawmakers. ◈

Odie B. Faulk is emeritus professor of history at Northeastern State University in Oklahoma. He lives in Waco, Texas.

'TIS THE SEASON
by Harold O.J. Brown

In late September, with eighty-degree temperatures and the foliage still almost totally green even in northern Illinois, it is hard to think Christmas thoughts. And as Nebuchadnezzar's would-be successor—or reincarnation—raves about imitating that energetic neo-Babylonian empire-builder and destroying Jerusalem, the approach of the Jewish High Holy Days reminds one of the fact that another Arab nation, 17 years ago, took advantage of Yom Kippur to launch a surprise war against Israel. Will the season be jolly this Christmas? Well, that depends on quite a

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few things. Speaking Christianly, of course one can say that from the perspective of faith, the same reason will exist for being happy at Christmas 1990 that has existed ever since that unique Nativity in Bethlehem just about two thousand years ago. But knowing reasons for being happy in principle does not always guarantee being happy in practice. However, leaving aside the many bad things as well as the good things that could happen between a late September magazine deadline and a December publication date, let us cast an eye on some of the lesser reasons for hope and happiness that we can discern on what Herman Dooyeweerd called the temporal horizon.

Over twenty years ago I returned to Harvard's Widener Library—it was in the summer of 1968—and met John H. Finley, Jr., the professor of classics whose teaching fellow—one of many—I had been a few years earlier. Even then, approaching retirement, Mr. Finley already represented the "old Harvard," where the "stock of the Puritans" was still alive, as "Fair Harvard" says, and the university could still make some claim to be a "bearer of truth and a herald of light," if no longer "the bearer" and "the herald." Looking out of his study window at the newly trashy condition of once-verdant Harvard Yard, Mr. Finley asked me what I thought of the changes. Then, without waiting for an answer, he continued, "It's exciting—all these brilliant young men and women, such questioning, so much imagination. If only it weren't all so sordid. . . ."

Mr. Finley is now very old, and quite thoroughly retired, in a genteel nursing home. Visitors have reported that his old wit frequently still shines through. But he is no longer up to making visits to Widener Library, or to the Harvard Yard. The grass is verdant once more, and such sordidness as there is is no longer so superficially apparent. Unfortunately, he cannot travel to the hinterland, and therefore he probably will not see what can be seen from library windows here.

I hope that this does not sound too much like an argument *pro domo*. But while Professor Bloom laments the closing of the American mind and the State University of New York publishes *The Moral Collapse of the University*, there are signs of new life. In *The Decline of the West*, Oswald Spengler predicted that the 1980's—just closed out—would be marked by an "increasing primitivism of the political process." Nineteen eighty-eight did nothing to refute him. He also predicted that international politics would begin to be dominated by monetary concerns (set "oil" for "money" and he is right on target). But what he did not predict was increasing numbers of young men and women turning, with zeal, enthusiasm, and vigor, to the study and propagation of the Christian tradition. There are 15 theological schools in the Greater Chicago cluster. One of them, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, has 40 percent of the total number of students.

The late Samuel Sandmel, a noted rabbinic scholar, once criticized his celebrated contemporaries Paul Tillich, Rudolf Bultmann, *et al.*, with the remark that he had always thought that Christianity made sense if one really believed its doctrines to be true, but only then. Conservative evangelical schools such as Trinity, Gordon-Conwell, and Westminster, to name but three, and renewal-oriented Roman Catholic schools such as the Franciscan University of Steubenville, by no means have the luster and prestige of Harvard, Yale, or even Notre Dame and the Catholic University of America. But they do have the students in theology and related disciplines, "brilliant young men and women" who really do believe the Christmas story to be true.

Students who peruse the Books of Daniel and of the Apocalypse, and observe Saddam Hussein masquerading as the new Nebuchadnezzar, may well wonder if we are not witnessing the "signs of the times" that herald the End. But—as Martin Luther said—if you know that the world will end tomorrow, you should still plant a tree today. Among the many ominous signs of the times, there are also positive ones, and among the most positive, in my evaluation, is the existence of such an energetic throng of young students who don't have a closed mind, who reject the "moral collapse" of the academy, and who are serious about their faith. It would be wonderful, from an evangelical perspective, to have a foothold in the older universities, but lacking that—at least for the moment—it is encouraging, and a sign of hope for the future, to see where so many of the students are. ◈

Harold O.J. Brown teaches Christian ethics and theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Illinois and is editor of The Religion & Society Report.

DOWN, NOT OUT

by John Shelton Reed

The editor has asked for "a few lines on some sign of hope, some change for the better, some reason for optimism" from my territory, so here are three cheery news items, two more or less having to do with the South, one with my trade of sociology.

For starters, how about the fact that National Public Radio has opened a Southern bureau? Since I've said some hard things in the past about the bicoastal bias of NPR, I'm happy now to give them credit for trying. True, they've set up shop in Chapel Hill, which doesn't provide much of a challenge to the dominant NPR sensibility, but at least they're not in Atlanta. NPR's Southern correspondent, David Molpus, apparently hasn't got entirely above his Mississippi raising; he got off to a good start by explaining that he chose to locate in North Carolina for its basketball and barbecue.

But in fact you can now get decent barbecue in Cambridge, Massachusetts. That's my second piece of good news: right there in the belly of the beast, in the heartland of secular humanism, they're deconstructing pigs at Jake & Earl's Barbecue. When I first heard about Bay State

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barbecue I feared the worst—something like the catfish recipe I saw in *Esquire* not long ago that called for minced shallots, dry Sauterne, heavy cream, and poached seedless grapes, with pastry crescents in place of hushpuppies. But Jake & Earl's is run by a Southside Virginia boy, Chris Schlesinger, who reportedly tends a pretty good, traditional pit. My spy complains that Jake & Earl's motto ought to be "Southern Food at Northern Prices," but many Yankees wouldn't take a $1.75 barbecue sandwich seriously. Besides, if a Virginian can rip them off, I say more power to him.

Obviously I don't buy the theory that eating pork makes you stupid, but good barbecue can certainly make you mellow, and Cambridge could use a dose of that. (By the way, Schlesinger is the author of *The Thrill of the Grill*, which is the kind of cookbook Jimmy Buffett would write if the composer-singer of such fun-in-the-sun masterworks as "Cheeseburger in Paradise" wrote cookbooks.)

To close on a more sober note: I wrote recently in *Chronicles* about Professor James Coleman of the University of Chicago, who a few years ago faced the threat of censure by the American Sociological Association. Coleman's transgression was not plagiarism, not fabricating data, not suppressing uncongenial findings, not dishonesty of any sort. On the contrary, Coleman had honestly reported his best interpretation of some sound research, and his offense, quite simply, was that his conclusions were not "p.c."—politically correct. In the event, the ASA did not disgrace itself by censuring a man who may be the most accomplished sociologist working today, but I gather it was a near thing.

Well, how's this for good news: Jim Coleman was recently elected president of the ASA. True, by any equitable standard his election was long overdue, but when he was finally nominated, he won handily.

It is ironic that Coleman was nominated by petition, having been passed over once again by the association's nominating committee, which came up with two worthy but less "controversial" figures. A generation ago, in *Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties*, Samuel Stouffer reported that the elites of most American organizations, from churches to labor unions, were more "liberal" than the rank and file. This sociological generalization seems to have held up pretty well over the years, and it seems to hold for the discipline of sociology itself. The fact that Coleman wasn't nominated by the association's official machinery suggests that the association's ordinary members are less far gone in ideological double-think—or at least less cowed by vocal pressure groups—than its leadership. Funny that it takes something like a populist revolt to restore "elitist" standards like excellence, isn't it?

We have a long way to go yet in sociology, and as far as I can see the condition of some other disciplines, notably in the humanities, is still deteriorating. But do you suppose that these things really do go in cycles? Could it be that the old academic values are just down, not out? ◈

John Shelton Reed is a professor of sociology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is spending the 1990-1991 academic year at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in Stanford, California.

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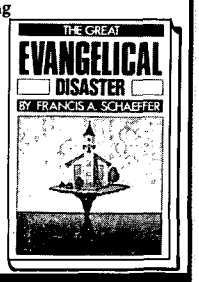

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WHY I LOVE THE LAMBADA

by Janet Scott Barlow

Three weeks after leaving home for college last fall, my son reported that he had attended a university-sponsored "minority festival," an event organized to explore, understand, and celebrate minority and alternative lifestyles, perspectives, and sensitivities. This was, however, a festival of unforeseen consequences, since it came to pass that all of the minority and alternative-lifestyle booths were completely ignored save one, that being the Hispanic booth, whose occupants, foregoing the usual leaflets and lectures, had set up a stage on which they presented a demonstration of the Lambada, that wonderfully steamy Latin-flavored dance. A huge and diverse crowd of students mobbed the front of the stage, all of them drawn there, according to my son, by a shared thirst for knowledge: the female partner in the dance duo—was she or was she not wearing panties under her twirling skirt?

The moral here is: never sell kids short. In a time when educators systematically practice political indoctrination in the name of intellectual and social development, it's nice to know that kids by their very nature—their nature being involuntarily youthful—are capable of turning coercion on its ear by transforming a university-sponsored sensitivity fest into a debate over a dancer's underwear. In the midst of artificially imposed questions, the young still seek real answers. Lambada, anyone? ◈

Janet Scott Barlow writes from Cincinnati.

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A Durable Fire

by George Core

"Literature is news that stays news."
—Ezra Pound

Entered From the Sun
by George Garrett
New York: Doubleday;
368 pp., $19.95

◆

George Garrett is a man of letters—a member of a diminishing breed that may soon vanish. For well over three decades he has regularly published poetry, criticism, and fiction long and short; he has also written screenplays and memoirs, and explored still other modes. This very facility as a writer of poetry and prose has somehow prevented him from receiving sustained attention and consequent rewards from the critical establishment in this country, especially the East, that he has deserved for a long while. This is not to say that Garrett has been ignored, for that is not the case. He was honored with the 1989 T.S. Eliot Award from The Ingersoll Foundation, and other prizes have come his way. But on the whole he has not received his due as a writer, nor has he been sufficiently recognized for his manifold and profound service to the Republic of Letters, a service that extends beyond what he has written to the people he has taught and others he helped, the many books he has edited, the dozens of projects he has nurtured.

Perhaps with the publication of *Entered From the Sun* this sad state of affairs will be altered to the good. Certainly Garrett has carried out his responsibility to his craft and to the reading public and has earned the praise that this novel is beginning to receive and that it richly deserves. And just as certainly he is first and foremost a novelist.

Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Entered From the Sun is the last novel in Garrett's Elizabethan trilogy, a glorious work that began with *Death of the Fox* (1971) and continued with *The Succession* (1983). The first novel culminates with the execution of Walter Raleigh in 1618; the second, in the death of Elizabeth and the succession of James I in 1603. The present novel centers on the events surrounding the murder of Christopher Marlowe in 1593; its action chiefly concerns the last year or so of that same decade—the end of the 16th century. We discern that the novelist has been steadily moving backward in time, but the period covered by the three novels, especially *The Succession*, runs from the birth of James in 1566 to his death in 1625. The three novels therefore extend over a considerable sweep of history but at the same time are focused on dramatic events that unfold in relatively short periods of time.

As Monroe Spears brilliantly demonstrated in "George Garrett and the Historical Novel" (*Virginia Quarterly Review*, 1985), Garrett has pushed the historical novel as a form to its limits but at the same time not been bound by the perceived limitations of that form. He has neither written popular fiction in this vein—that is, costume romance—nor has he allowed himself to be cribbed, cabined, and confined by the facts of the period as they can be ascertained through documentary evidence. Yet he has stayed within those facts—and not given himself the free rein of the costume romancer to career through history and trample it.

The facts concerning Christopher Marlowe's death are precious few, and that death will always be mysterious. That he was the Muses' darling, as his contemporaries, especially his fellow poets and dramatists, thought; that he was probably a homosexual and an atheist and a spy as well, not to mention an extraordinarily difficult, contentious, and hot-tempered man are matters hardly open to dispute. Marlowe, Garrett believes and makes us believe, was murdered by agents of Sir Francis Walsingham, a patron of the arts who also created England's first professional secret service and thus helped defeat the Spanish Armada by indirect means. Marlowe was on Wal-

George Core is the editor of the Sewanee Review.

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singham's payroll and perhaps refused his orders, with the result that his service and life were terminated.

The plot of *Entered From the Sun* turns upon Marlowe's death. The leading characters of the novel—Joseph Hunnyman, a minor player in the theater and a petty confidence man, and Captain William Barfoot, an adventurer and soldier—are hired by rival shadowy organizations to investigate Marlowe's death and to seek new evidence and determine what was involved beyond an apparent tavern brawl among drunken acquaintances.

The engine driving the action of *Entered From the Sun* is one of the oldest in literature—the detective plot. Think of *Hamlet, Bleak House, Crime and Punishment,* and many another classic in which the action is powered by the reader's wanting to know the simple—and yet endlessly complicated—facts of a dazzling crime (often, as in this instance, murder). It is a dramatic situation fraught with possibility and worthy of our fascinated scrutiny.

This plot leads the reader into the rich world of the Tudors, a world previously dramatized to such good effect by only one other novelist—Ford Madox Ford (in his Fifth Queen trilogy, which deals with Henry's reign and concerns intrigue in all its guises). I mention Ford for several reasons: Garrett has Ford's easy command of the idioms of the time and his same ability not to fall into mimicry or burlesque or archaism while forging a style appropriate to the period and at once modern—contemporaneous, not contemporary, we might say. Garrett also has Ford's singular ability to use real people as leading characters, but he creates a wider range of fictitious characters to people and move his action. The principal historical figure is, of course, Raleigh, who appears in a brilliant scene toward the end of the new novel—and on the eve of Barfoot's departure for a campaign in Ireland. It is there that we last see Barfoot: he is surrounded by Irish irregulars and fighting for his life.

In contrast Hunnyman, who in terms of simple poetic justice has much less right to a long life than Barfoot (who has survived many a scrape during his honorable service), lives to be an old man. Such are the whims of the world, the chances of Dame Fortune (or the turns of Mutability), Garrett is saying—but not in his own voice. The action is filtered through the consciousness of Barfoot, Hunnyman, and still others; it is presented pictorially and scenically and through invented letters, actual quotations, and still other means that only a skilled writer who is saturated in the history (social, cultural, popular) of the times could possibly bring to bear with any substantial degree of authenticity. It is this authenticity that has been praised by such literary historians as Samuel Schoenbaum and O.B. Hardison, Jr., as well as by such critics as Monroe Spears and Walter Sullivan.

The reader of any of these three novels—which do not depend upon one another but which together constitute an impressive whole—immediately enters the world of everyday life in Tudor and Stuart England. You get a keen sense of how the mundane world impinged upon the ordinary Englishman who was struggling to make a life for himself and his wife and children and who might find himself caught in a web of intrigue involving religion or politics or both. In such a web Marlowe was caught, as was his erstwhile roommate and fellow dramatist, Thomas Kyd; and many another artist found himself faced with the loss of limb or life for sins real and imagined against the state.

Christopher Marlowe, whose poetry was generated by a fine madness and was often "all air and fire," as Michael Drayton observed, remains a splendid poet and playwright. During this summer and last my wife and I have seen superb productions of *Faustus* and *Edward II* mounted and performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford. It is little wonder that various people from Marlowe's time to ours have argued that he did not die in the brawl at the tavern in Deptford but lived on to write Shakespeare's plays. Garrett is too shrewd to suggest such a thing, but he catches the essential mystery of the man's life and death in this novel, which finally is only incidentally about the Muses' darling and which ultimately celebrates the mysteries of the very uncertain life during this time of woe and wonder.

George Garrett has been contemplating this world for most of his mature life, and he nearly wrote a dissertation on it while a graduate student at Princeton. He did not, thank God, spend himself on such a puny assignment but instead wrote these fascinating novels and in the process recreated the Elizabethan world, the most complex and various by a large measure that English civilization has witnessed during its mighty history. Anyone seeking to understand that world—to experience the impulses that ran hot and cold in the blood and marrow of Englishmen great and small—will learn more of it from these novels than any source or book in history. This is history with a profoundly human dimension, fiction fortified by history—the world of the past coming to life in the present.

LIBERAL ARTS

EMMA LAZARUS, GO HOME

Like the Israelis protesting the influx of Soviet Jews, and the followers of Le Pen upset over the Islamization of French culture, Swedes have joined the growing chorus of citizens calling for immigration control.

Last summer a major study revealed that six out of ten Swedes believe that their country is taking in far too many immigrants. As reported in *Nordstjerna*, only 35 percent of Swedish citizens thought immigration was a problem in 1989; this figure has now risen to 61 percent. According to the survey, two of every three Swedes believe new laws are needed to control immigration, and one-third no longer see political asylum as a legitimate reason for justifying entrance to their country.

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The Wonder of Academe

by William H. Nolte

"The high-minded man must care more for truth than for what people think."
—Aristotle

Unseasonable Truths: The Life of Robert Maynard Hutchins
by Harry S. Ashmore
Boston and New York: Little, Brown & Company; 616 pp., $27.00

◆

While being interviewed on William Buckley's *Firing Line*, Harry Ashmore remarked that he had allowed the subject of his *Unseasonable Truths: The Life of Robert Maynard Hutchins* to tell the story of his life and work through the numerous quotations that fill the pages of the book. Ashmore is too modest. To be sure, he constantly quotes Hutchins, whose prose was a model of candor and wit, but this biography is much more than a compilation of quotations held together by the thread of chronological events. Ashmore is not just an amanuensis, a Boswell noting the remarks of his mentor. Far from it, indeed. What we have here, in brief, is a splendid example of the biographer's art—scholarly but never pedantic or dull, comprehensive in its details, temperate and objective in its conclusions, and beautifully written. It is an extraordinary book about an equally extraordinary man.

And yet for all Hutchins' acclaim as the Boy Wonder of Academe, earned by his having been named dean of the Yale Law School at age 28 and president of the University of Chicago at 29, I cannot help believing that he was, like so many great men—that is great in the Socratic sense of being eminently rational and hence wise and good—a failure. At least a failure in that what he fought so hard for and dreamed of accomplishing has all come to nought. In his last chapter, entitled "Post Mortem," Ashmore implies as much, albeit unwittingly, when he summarizes Hutchins' views of education and the role of the university in effecting those aims. "Central to his thinking," Ashmore notes, "was the proposition that human beings were not likely to act rationally until and unless they had been educated, or had educated themselves, in a fashion that enhanced their intellectual powers and opened their minds to ideas that might run counter to their instincts or conflict with those they had accepted as articles of faith. His concern was with the institutional means by which this might be accomplished." And then, driving the point home: "Hutchins insisted that the only functions appropriate to the university were intellectual ones."

Anna Mycek-Wodecki

All of which is doubtless true. But then what rational, or even semirational, being would argue today that those are the only, or even primary, functions of our universities? For fifty years Hutchins opposed the "specialization" of learning at the undergraduate level in our schools, of turning our educational institutions into training or trade schools. And in the end he knew that his efforts had been largely wasted. He wrote his old friend Thornton Wilder, with whom he had corresponded since their undergraduate days together at Oberlin, that it was astonishing how little had come from all the money he had raised over the years, particularly money that had been spent on the social sciences. By the time of his death, in May 1977, the work for which he was best known (at the University of Chicago) had been totally dismantled. "Its years of distinction," Nicholas von Hoffman wrote in his eulogy to Hutchins, "are long behind it now so that it's another Ivy-League-type training academy for the managerial classes of business and government as well as being a normal school for university professors." Calling him "the last of the great and greatly individualistic American university presidents," Von Hoffman predicted that he wouldn't be missed, or even remembered.

And such, in fact, is the case—or almost so. The few people of my acquaintance who recall him at all remember him as the man who in 1940 got rid of football at Chicago.

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Which was no mean feat in itself and one that would, considering the obscene part played by college athletic programs, serve as a star in the crown of any university president. In all fairness though, I should point out that Hutchins had this advantage over most university presidents, many of whom doubtless agreed with his belief that football had "the same relation to education that bullfighting has to agriculture": Hutchins headed a small private university that was badly strapped for money. Moreover, in the season before he recommended that football be discontinued, Chicago had defeated only two opponents, Oberlin and Wabash, and had been madly mauled by the rest, including, of all unlikely schools, Harvard. Thus the time was ripe for removal of the excrescence. And Hutchins' logic was unanswerable:

> Since we cannot hope to win against our present competition and since we cannot profitably change our competition, only two courses are open to us: to subsidize players or to discontinue intercollegiate football. We cannot subsidize players or encourage our alumni to do so without departing from our principles and losing our self-respect. We must therefore discontinue the game.

I was happy to learn that the president of the University of Arkansas, J. William Fulbright, wrote Hutchins to congratulate him for having done what other enlightened souls could only dream of doing.

Hutchins' greatest years, it seems to me, were those he spent at Chicago (1929-1951) when he was constantly embroiled in battle over the aims of higher education. When his little book *The Higher Learning in America* appeared (1936), various critics thought they discerned fascist tendencies in its theses. For example, John Dewey wrote that though he "would not intimate that [Hutchins] has any sympathy with consequent appeal to *some* fixed authority that is now overrunning the world," etc. Hutchins' reply was typically (and devastatingly) serene:

> Mr. Dewey's dexterous intimation that I am a fascist in result if not intention (made more dexterous by his remark that he is making no such intimation) suggests the desirability of the education I have proposed. A graduate of my hypothetical university writing for his fellow alumni would know that such observations were rhetoric and would be received as such. As a matter of fact fascism is a consequence of the absence of philosophy. It is possible only in the context of the disorganization of analysis and the disruption of the intellectual tradition through the pressure of immediate practical concerns . . .
>
> Mr. Dewey has suggested that only a defective education can account for some of my views. I am moved to inquire whether the explanation of some of his may not be that he thinks he is still fighting nineteenth-century German philosophy.

The two men differed, of course, in that Dewey believed "Reason and Intellect in the classic tradition" should play an auxiliary role in higher education, whereas Hutchins believed they were primary, and all else auxiliary.

Within a few years after going to Chicago, Hutchins admitted to intimates that he wished to move on to something else, and with the strong backing of such friends as William O. Douglas, Harold Ickes, and Harry Hopkins he seemed destined for a place on the Supreme Court. In fact, according to Ickes, then Secretary of the Interior, Roosevelt promised that he would appoint him to the Court. Instead, he offered Hutchins his choice of the chairmanships of the SEC and the FCC—and then professed surprise, according to Ickes, when Hutchins declined. Roosevelt also let it be known that he might name Hutchins as his running mate in 1940, but by then Europe was at war and Roosevelt was intent on joining the fray, though in view of the pacifist temper of the populace at large he had to conceal his intentions until after being elected. Moreover, he had to know that Hutchins was strongly opposed to our intervention, and was in fact an outspoken opponent of our repeating the error of Woodrow Wilson. Ashmore states that Hutchins "was appalled by the presidential campaign. Both candidates seemed to him to be joined in an exercise in hypocrisy intended to disguise the fact that the country was actually being prepared for direct military intervention in a foreign war."

Once we were in the war, the Japanese having committed their almost unparalleled act of imbecility at Pearl Harbor, Hutchins nevertheless informed the faculty at Chicago that their educational concerns must be set aside, at least in large part, for "the short-run activity of winning the war. Education and research, as we have understood them at the University of Chicago, are long-run activities. We have stood for liberal education and pure research. What the country must have we must try to supply." Hutchins believed that the war would be won in the laboratories. The most important of those laboratories, as it turned out, would be located at his university.

As a striking example of Hutchins' lifelong habit of "speaking the truth unseasonably," and thereby causing the nearsighted to grumble, I point to his university convocation address of—note the date—June 15, 1945. There he spoke of the moral confusion into which the victors had fallen. As Ashmore notes, it would be "difficult to imagine any other university president, then or now, delivering a public address comparable to the one he made on 'The New Realism' at a University convocation while the country was still celebrating the victory over Nazi Germany." In reading the lengthy quotation from the speech, a part of which I shall reproduce, I recalled Matthew 7:3: "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?":

> So we call Japanese soldiers fanatics when they died rather than surrender, whereas American soldiers who do the same thing are heroes. We prove that all Germans are murderers and all Japanese apes, and at the same time insist that we are going to have one world in which all men are brothers. We say we are going to

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reeducate the Germans, and adopt a policy of nonfraternization. We hate slavery and propose forced labor. We want Europe rebuilt, but will have no heavy industry in Germany. We want order in Europe, but not if we have to sacrifice to prevent starvation. We are against dictatorship, but the dictatorship of the proletariat is an exception. And the new day dawns by the light of the burning homes of Tokyo and Yokohama. . . .

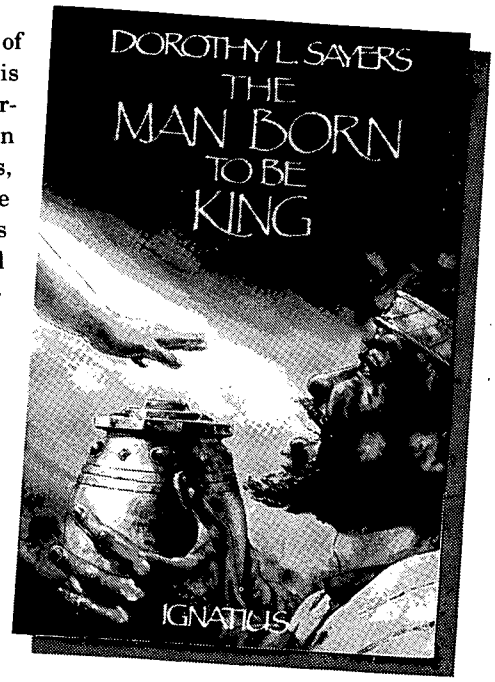
The conquest of the United States by Hitler is revealed by our adoption of the Nazi doctrine that certain races or nations are superior and fit to rule, whereas others are vicious and fit only to be exterminated or enslaved. We are now talking about guilty races. We are saying about the Germans and Japanese what Hitler said about the Jews. And we are saying about ourselves—or at least we are strongly hinting it—what Hitler said about the blond teutonic "Aryans."

Hutchins accepted a position with the Ford Foundation in 1951, and was thereafter the leading figure with various of the tributary "funds" that sprang from the foundation's source—most of them now utterly forgotten. When heading up the Fund for the Republic he came under fire from both the right and left—from the born-again Marxists or the American Committee for Cultural Freedom and from the far-right loonies of the Hearst press, columnists like Fulton Lewis, and simpleminded "patriots" on the House Un-American Activities Committee. In 1959 he established the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, housed on an estate in the hills around Santa Barbara. Looking back, one may wonder what, if anything, the center accomplished by bringing intellectuals from all over the world to hear and read papers on the various and sundry topics then fevering their high brows. Someone once defined "committee" as a group of men who keep minutes and waste hours. Not much more can be said for most conferences. Still, even if we assume that Hutchins' efforts were in large part wasted, we must admire the efforts for their good intentions. Nor can we doubt Ashmore's assessment of him as "the most celebrated, and contentious, educator of his generation."

For that matter, we have had no university president of comparable heft and beam since Hutchins left his Chicago post. With the transformation, now blatantly acknowledged and widely advertised, of eduation into a *business* concern, the celebrity attained by our educational leaders is more often than not derisory in nature. With the possible exception of John Silber, the cantankerous president of Boston University, our educational leaders today adhere to the eminently safe policy of giving the populace what it wants, of subscribing, in other words, to the myth that the voice of the people is the voice of God. Hutchins was the most persuasive opponent of that doctrine we have to show. And for that we must honor him.

For Christmas Give the King

One of the most popular of Dorothy Sayers' works, this play-cycle was originally performed very successfully on BBC. Based on the Gospels, and completely faithful to the inspired accounts of Christ's life, Sayers adds unrecorded conversations, minor characters and all the details that give concreteness to the Gospel accounts. She does this in such a realistic and engaging manner that the whole Gospel story comes alive in our midst. Inspiring reading at any time but especially during the Christmas season. A wonderful gift book.



"There is no other word but magnificent for this play drawn from the Gospels. Sayer's interpretation of the characters is simply brilliant. Her Jesus can bring tears to your eyes. You will be deeply moved—a powerful experience."
— Sheldon Vanauken

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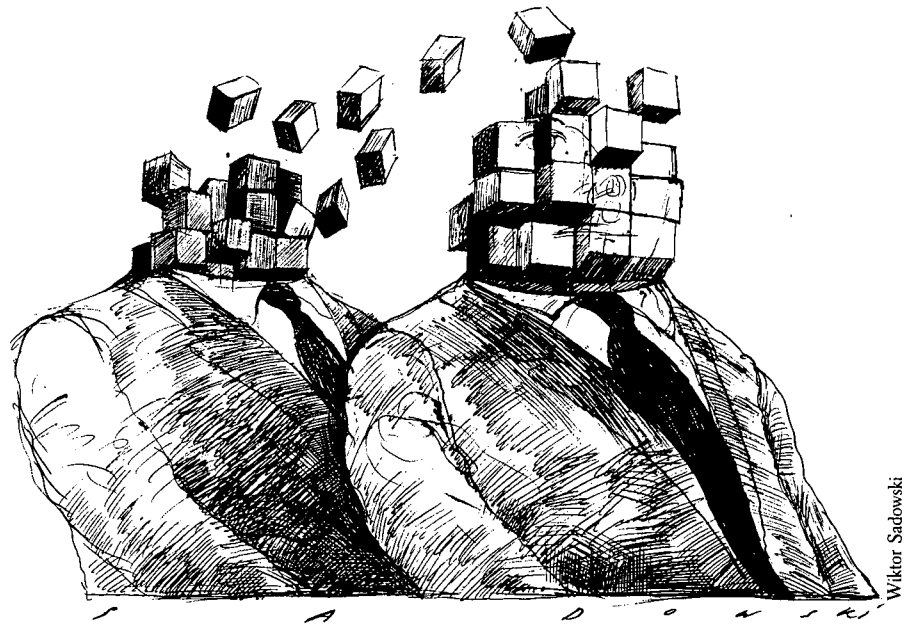
Affirmative Scholarship

by Murray N. Rothbard

"An excellent scholar! One that hath a head filled with calves' brains without any sage in it."

—John Webster



Preferential Policies: An International Perspective
by Thomas Sowell
New York: William Morrow; 221 pp., $17.95

◆

Thomas Sowell has become a virtual one-man publishing industry, and *Preferential Policies* is his latest contribution to the Sowell book-of-the-year club. It is not surprising to find that this scattered and woefully disorganized potboiler is part of a "much larger international study of racial and ethnic groups—a study still in progress." Unfortunately, the wrongheadedness Sowell displays even in the few cases where he seems to have done substantial work (as in Ceylon/Sri Lanka) gives us little reason to think that his major work will be much of an improvement.

An example of his scholarship: in his few brief references to blacks in the United States, Sowell does not seem to realize that his accounts contradict each other. He portrays the condition of blacks (at least outside of government employment) as pretty much a steady march upward from the Civil War until the counterproductive apparatus of affirmative action arrived in the 1960's; yet he writes of the pervasive Jim Crow streetcar laws passed between 1900 and 1903, laws which clearly marked a worsening of the position of Southern blacks. This case also offers a good example of Sowell's lack of historical curiosity. If he had looked a bit deeper, he would have discovered the reason for the wave of Jim Crow in the South: the Progressive movement, which disenfranchised black voters. In short, Southern Bourbons (laissez-faire conservatives), who had ruled since Reconstruction, were replaced by Progressives, who intervened in issues of race as well as economics. Ironically, attention to this point would have strengthened Sowell's free-market approach.

To impose some sort of order on his smattering of countries and examples, Sowell unfortunately chose to separate his cases into three categories: "Majority Preferences [Political Privileges] in Majority Economies," "Majority Preferences in Minority Economies," *i.e.* where minorities are economically dominant, and "Minority Preferences in Majority Economies" (roughly, modern affirmative action policies for chosen minorities). But these organizing principles make little difference in the analysis, nor do they hold up well as distinctions under investigation.

Sowell, for example, finds only two modern cases of Category 1: the American South and South Africa. And yet whites in South Africa are clearly a minority of the population, so that this case should be placed in a fourth category curiously absent from Sowell's book: "Minority Preferences in Minority Economies." Furthermore, the argument could be made that whites were a minority in much of the South, so that the U.S. case might come under the fourth category as well. In fact, the only clear-cut existing case of Category 1 is glaringly absent: governmental disabilities (such as prohibition of the ownership of land) placed by the state of Israel on its Arab minority. (Israel is only mentioned in

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undocumented references to affirmative action — Category 3 — laws on behalf of its Sephardic minority. Except that the Sephardics may well be in a majority, which would rudely shift these actions into Category 2.)

Sowell also persistently refuses to face the difficult questions. Thus, in discussing Category 2, "Majority Preferences in Minority Economies," he confronts situations where the numerical majority acts through government to hobble economically dominant minorities (the Chinese in Malaysia, the Lebanese in Sierra Leone). Sowell criticizes these actions because the "overrepresentation" of, say, Chinese in top Malaysian economic positions, which is obviously not due to government privilege, must have been legitimately achieved by merit. I agree with Sowell, but it is surely incumbent on him to consider the common counter-argument: that these minority groups enjoy the support of their own "clannish" networks, that they find, hire, and promote each other, and that, using such networks, they arrive at their socially privileged positions illegitimately and at the expense of the majority. The point is not that this argument is correct, nor that it justifies political action against the "clannish," only that a serious scholar must consider and rebut it. But it is never mentioned.

For an example of deeply flawed analysis even where considerable work was done, let us take Sowell on Ceylon/Sri Lanka. Before and after Britain granted Ceylon independence in 1948, everything, according to Sowell, was racially and ethnically harmonious. But then, out of the blue, the Sinhalese demagogue S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike injected the irrationality of Sinhalese racism into Sri Lankan politics in 1956, and the result has been bloody conflict ever since. If only all parties pursued "reason" and "compromise," according to Sowell, they could achieve consensus under free-market and non-group-preference policies, and all except a few troublemakers would be better off.

In this we see not only the vagaries of Thomas Sowell but the deficiencies of free-market economists in general. Thus, to Sowell, problems of language and culture are either bizarre and irrational or else simply masks for the economic privileges of various ethnic groups. And yet, as we have seen most recently in the flare-up over Quebec and its relation to Canada, it makes a big difference to everyone *which language* is used in courts, schools, and street signs. Most people love their language and resent proceedings in some other tongue. There is nothing peculiar or irrational about that. The governing elite of Ceylon had been educated in English, in British schools. A governing elite speaking and writing English made a great deal of sense so long as Ceylon was a colony of Britain; but it made no sense whatever once Ceylon had become independent Sri Lanka. Seventy percent of the people of Sri Lanka are Buddhists who speak Sinhalese; 20 percent are Hindus who speak Tamil. Only a small fraction of either group speak English, and, to irritate the majority Sinhalese even further, most of the English-speakers happen to be Tamil. There could hardly be a situation more inherently explosive, yet Sowell puts the whole problem down to irrational emotionalism injected into politics by Bandaranaike, an irrationality that somehow took on a continuing life of its own.

The point is that independence for Sri Lanka, while an admirable thing on many grounds, made fierce ethnic conflict inevitable. It is typical of Sowell's failure to understand linguistic and ethnic conflict that he dismisses the Tamil independence movement as the work of "extremists." While it is true that Tamil independence — in fact, ethnic partition of the island — would not solve the problems of the ethnically mixed areas in Sri Lanka, it *would* settle much of the problem by separating the concentrated Tamil area in the north from the rest of the island. Ethnic partition is no panacea, but it greatly reduces the area and scope of social conflict, which is something that free-marketeers are supposed to favor. But Sowell, like most free-market economists, is a utilitarian democrat, and like most utilitarian democrats, he believes that everyone's ends are roughly the same. In that case, sweet reason can easily prevail. But *in what language* is that sweet reason to be expressed?

To put it another way: democratic theory tells us that the will of the majority should prevail. But then, over *what* territorial area should voting expressive of that will take place? And why shouldn't the Tamils of northern Sri Lanka be able to vote all by themselves? But if the democrat is to take the stern position that no secession or partition must ever be tolerated, then by what logic shouldn't the territory of the will of the majority be expanded to the entire world? In other words, doesn't adamant opposition to any secession imply one-world government? And if Thomas Sowell or any other democrat is prepared to go the full way and advocate world government, then in what language should its deliberations take place?

Sowell's blind spot on the language question also deeply affects his analysis of Assam, a large state in northeastern India. Sowell is openly contemptuous of the affluent though "indolent" Assamese peasantry who, early in British rule, objected strenuously to the competition of the immigrating Bengalis. Hungrier and more enterprising, the Bengalis soon grew to economic dominance in Assam. It is easy to tut-tut self-righteously over the envy and bad sportsmanship of the Assamese, until we realize that Sowell, once again, pooh-poohs the importance of the language problem. For the Assamese understandably bridled at Bengali rapidly becoming the major language of the schools and of the ruling elites. Is this merely irrationality and mean-spiritedness? Is it really so absurd for the Assamese to wish to continue as a majority in Assam and to preserve the dominance of the Assamese language?

In short, mere economic analysis, looking at ethnic conflict solely as a desire for special economic privilege by the less competent, misses a crucial dimension of the problem. And this brings us straight to the immigration question. Is it really impermissible for a home population using its traditional language to wish to retain its majority status in its own homeland? Apparently, Thomas Sowell believes so. But then what would he say to the Latvians (or Estonians or Moldavians) who have seen the Russians employ over the past half-century a deliberate policy of Russification — the destruction of the indigenous language and culture by encouraging the immigration of masses of Russians, who have now reached something like 50 percent of the popu-

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lation in these countries? Would he brusquely dismiss any Latvian attempts to preserve their identity and culture by, say, restricting the voting power of immigrant Russians? And if not, why would he accord Latvians or Moldavians any more privileged a status than the Assamese?

This is not to deny that Sowell the economist brings strengths to his analysis. His insistence that ethnic discrimination takes place far more easily in government than in the free market because the employer or the landlord must, on the market, pay the costs of his own discrimination is well-taken. In government, on the other hand, the costs can be loaded onto the taxpayers. Sowell also shows that the beneficiaries of affirmative action in the United States are not the majority of blacks but the noisy and relatively well-off black elites. But these arguments are by now old hat, and they don't begin to make up for the arrogant exclusion of moral and cultural factors from the discussion.

It is a besetting sin of modern economists (whatever their ideology) that they understandably burn to deliver pronouncements on political questions but hold it necessary to cleave to the pose of "value-free scientists," sternly dismissing all noneconomic positions as absurd, whimsical, and lacking the commanding weight of Science. Even Sowell's tone follows suit: his writing is clear enough, but delivered in a plodding and monotonous style, unrelieved by any flashes of wit or insight—a style the late British humorist Stephen Potter marvelously described as "plonking."

And yet, at crucial moments, Sowell's work is "political" in the worst sense. Central to the entire question of preferential politics and affirmative action, at least in the United States, is the fatal initial step of compulsory integration. For before the mandating of coerced privileges to blacks occurred the first critical intervention: the federal government trampled on the rights of private property by making "discrimination" (first against blacks and now against a never-ending parade of groups) illegal. The right to employ or to rent or to sell must imply the right to exclude from employment or rent or sale; destruction of that right by outlawing discrimination leads to the current flood of horrors as the night follows the day. Free-market economics, if it means anything at all, means the freedom to own property and to contract for that property as one sees fit. Neoconservatism, on the other hand, supports the initial compulsory integration or anti-discrimination stage of civil rights but balks at affirmative action. Thomas Sowell, however, is both a free-market economist and a political neoconservative. Where does he stand on this crucial conflict? Who knows? For once again, he deals with this important question by simply not bringing it up.

What accounts for the continuing overvaluation of Thomas Sowell among the reading public in general and in the conservative movement in particular? Could it have anything to do with the fact that Sowell is one of the very few black free-market economists? Economists are very familiar with the fact that one's market value is in direct proportion to one's scarcity, and Sowell is all too scarce a phenomenon. But surely the familiar arguments against affirmative action should apply even here: it is kinder, both to Sowell himself and to the cause of truth and scholarship, to treat him as everyone should be treated—according to individual merit, and in a color-blind manner.

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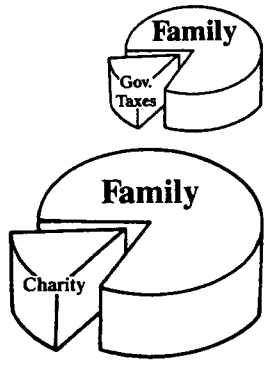

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Montana on the Move

by A. Carl Bredahl, Jr.

Ride With Me, Mariah Montana
by Ivan Doig
New York: Atheneum;
329 pp., $18.95

◆

With this latest novel, Ivan Doig completes his McCaskill trilogy, begun in 1984 with *English Creek* and followed in 1987 with *Dancing at the Rascal Fair*. *Ride With Me, Mariah Montana* is good Doig, and that means readers can expect crisp dialogue, rapid pace, vital language, and many satisfied hours with this handsome volume from Atheneum.

But Ivan Doig has always offered readers more than just a smooth story; he challenges both his readers and himself with his effort to pull together language, people, space, and time. That effort continues in *Mariah Montana*, producing the book's particular fascination but, at the same time, creating problems that ultimately make this particular novel less satisfying than earlier offerings.

Mariah Montana is Jick McCaskill's first-person account of his travels with his daughter Mariah (nicknamed Mariah Montana by her college classmates), a photographer for the Missoula *Montanian*, and her ex-husband Riley Wright, a journalist for the same newspaper. As the state gears up for its centennial, Mariah and Riley are out after the unique, the essential Montana. Jick, now 65 years old, is along for the ride and to keep peace between the former lovers. If one plays through that brief outline, the challenge and pleasure of the book becomes clear: a world coming apart that wants desperately to put itself back together.

In 1989 Montana is no longer the 1930's environment readers were introduced to when they first met Jick in *English Creek*. Ranchers are being swallowed by big business. Fax machines, motor homes, and microwave ovens have become standard fare for the generation of Mariah and Riley. So Jick is more than just along for the ride; he is trying to understand the demise of the Noon Creek ranch, the death of his wife Marcella, and the broken marriage of his beloved Mariah. While Jick works with his problems, the visually oriented Mariah and the verbal Riley try to unify their distinctively different talents in capturing a sequence of Montanas. The effort to pool their skills, see both the unity and diversity of the state, and once again unify their lives in a second attempt at marriage is the struggle for visual/verbal, female/male union. "Enumerating is one thing and making it all add up is a hell of another."

Mariah Montana is good, but it would be a mistake to imply, as the dustjacket does, that this is Doig at his best. So much is being attempted in this latest work that the complexity frequently gets in the way of characterization and story. With the narration given to Jick, the old man is continually reminded of previous scenes and earlier individuals out of his life, and the reader is continually reminded that this book concludes a trilogy. Instead, for example, of developing Mariah, Jick gives us some information on Mariah and on his remembered wife Marcella, but Marcella is a woman the reader has never met and never does meet.

Like the individual episodes that will perhaps comprise the essential Montana, the pieces that comprise Mariah and Marcella—or Riley or Jick—have to struggle for integrated life. In order to make this book really work, we must feel Jick's pain at the loss of his wife, daughter, and ranch, but we have never met the wife, never seen Jick as a rancher, and are always seeing Mariah in relation to that absent wife. The struggle for Jick and for the two journalists is to bring pieces together; the struggle for the reader is similar. Unless we are convinced about Jick's pain at the loss of Marcella or his tears at the discovery of letters revealing Angus McCaskill's hopeless love, the scenes simply won't carry the kind of power similar scenes do in *English Creek* and *Dancing at the Rascal Fair*. As Mariah and Riley discover, wanting to see Montana or the past is not enough if the disjunction of eye and word predominates.

For those of us who like Ivan Doig's work, *Ride With Me, Mariah Montana* poses intriguing possibilities. It is a narrative whose focus is "home"; it concludes a trilogy whose focus is "home." And by its very nature, a trilogy itself provides a "home" for both author and reader. Setting out to do a trilogy, a writer establishes a stable base within which he can remain for the years he spends with the trilogy. Readers familiar with *This House of Sky* know that "home" has always been central to Doig's work. In its very stability and comfort, however, "home" can become a threat to maturation and growth. With *Mariah Montana*, the trilogy ends, the Noon Creek ranch is no longer the home of the McCaskills, and the narrator departs in a motor home. In the opening pages, Mariah tells Jick that all he wants to do is "mope off home to the ranch and vegetate." That threat seems to be voided as Jick goes out with Riley's mother at the end, but whether that departure is promise of growth or retreat to the long desired golden girl remains an open question.

It has problems, but *Ride With Me, Mariah Montana* is a rich conclusion to the McCaskill trilogy and an integral part of the evolving Doig narrative. As Jick tells Mariah, "it's time to make loss into change."

A. Carl Bredahl, Jr. is an associate professor of English at the University of Florida. He is the author of Melville's Angles of Vision *and* New Ground: Western American Narrative and the Literary Canon.

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The Old Reliable

by J.O. Tate

The Folks That Live on the Hill
by Kingsley Amis
New York: Summit Books;
246 pp., $18.95

Here is a sentence that begins with the deep predication of Henry James, though not with his tone, and proceeds to a cadenza in the unmistakable Amis mode: "On current form he would never be in danger of imagining that her merely being his sister somehow made Clare less effectively a woman than the rest of her sex, or what was nowadays called her gender, as if like all the others she had become a noun or adjectival form in an inflected language." There is a divinity that shapes Kingsley Amis's prose style, rough-hew it how he will.

I read Amis, as I think many others do, in order to read sentences like that one, and even better ones. While there is no shortage of such in *The Folks That Live on the Hill*, that is not the only cause to enjoy Amis's latest novel. Others are the old-fashioned virtues of characterization, development, suspense, and incidental comedy. Also there are atmosphere, social observation, sense of place—the entire composition being the picture of England that is really a postcard from Amisland.

The Folks That Live on the Hill mines something of the same vein as *The Old Devils*, *Difficulties With Girls*, and *Stanley and the Women*, recent Amis productions. There are the themes of alcohol, sex, aging, the decline of the quality of life, the meager but necessary survival of love, courtesy, and good will. There is the broad canvas of characters arranged on Shepherd's Hill and related to each other through the central character, Harry Caldecote. A retired librarian ambivalent about his career and his culture, and obsessed with sex and booze into the bargain, Harry's a familiar type, a Lucky Jim grown older—and wiser, too. Harry has left in his veins some of the milk of human kindness, and he knows when and how to share it.

Because he's shrewd and generous, Harry is sometimes a bit of a mark. Relatives, in-laws, all kinds want a piece of him. Desiree, the wife of his poor brother, Freddie, tries to manipulate Harry in one of the most wickedly funny passages Amis ever wrote. She tries to imply there's a "special relationship" between them as Harry resists her flirtatious arm-twisting:

> There was supposed to have been a sexual encounter of uncertain duration between the two of them in and around a smallish car in some woods or on some waste ground somewhere. Whether it had amounted to an act of intercourse even God might have been a little bit uncertain. Neither Desiree nor Harry had said more than a couple of words about it at the time. Then gradually it had dawned on him that she was treating the whole thing (what whole thing?) as unmistakably special, specially intense to a degree that transcended its brevity and elevated it to some undefined area of the great-loves-of-our-time category.

But Harry manages to help Freddie in spite of the impossible Desiree, who is undoubtedly related to the unforgettable Margaret who so troubled Jim Dixon 36 years ago.

Now, 20 novels on, Amis has become "Sir Kingsley," and no wonder. Her British Majesty has followed the public's lead, for this author has been the best popular novelist in England—and in the English-speaking world—for over three decades. As he shows Harry Caldecote's relations with his widowed sister Clare, with his alcoholic niece Fiona, his lesbian daughter Bunty, and with all the other men and women and the enveloping process of change and loss, Amis leavens satire with sentiment, and shows range as well as depth. Above all, he completes his portrait of the Harry who can say, "Holding people in play is my natural game."

In other words, *The Folks That Live on the Hill* is a solid, substantial, and satisfying work, the sort of book that people crave. But returning to my emphasis on texture over structure, I find even more to relish. Little things mean a lot.

Who else but Kingsley Amis would compose a prose poem of exasperation to a big slobbering dog—or could? The passages about Towser, canny combinations of external observation and internal indignation, are worthy of Smollett and Dickens at their verbally inventive best; and in those passages Towser seems to be another character, a *presence*, not always the most annoying one around and not even the stupidest, but certainly the one most endowed with toenails and saliva.

Reading Amis's prose is a trip, a blast, a whirl on the merry-go-round. Agile intelligence is confounded by its own vexation, and good sense often is expressed in language that is somehow in tense opposition to good taste. I suppose that when Desmond the restaurateur has words with Phillipa the cook, Amis is hinting something about language and values and even about the book under discussion. He has to tell her to give the clients what they want, not what she supposes they ought to want. Her reply is, "You ought to be doing the food in the army. Or a prison. An oil-rig. Where it's eat what's there or go without." Desmond's riposte, it seems to me, obliquely explains much about the aesthetics and morals not only of Desmond's cuisine but also of Amis's discourse:

> For your information I happen to know that the food on oil-rigs is gourmet standard, and I mean proper gourmet standard, not just half bottles of Cyprus red poured into everything. It has to be to get the blokes there, because they can't drink while they're there. And yeah, in the army and prisons they call things by their right names.

The prose of Sir Kingsley Amis fuses high knowledge with low intuition, intellect with feeling, exaltation with grumbling, tarts and toffs, cabbages and kings, the mind and the body. What's offered for the eye to scan is a whole scale of experience, a ladder of emotion from the low to the lofty, one comprehensively rendered through the medium of its expression. The Amis style, not only telling us but showing us how to look at things, leaves nothing promised that is not performed.

J.O. Tate is a professor of English at Dowling College on Long Island.

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Exit Stage Left

by Gregory McNamee

The Disappearance of the Outside
by Andrei Codrescu
Reading, MA: Addison Wesley;
216 pp., $17.95

◆

The Outside: beyond wall and watchtower, on the far lee of the border, the place of the Other, the place of exile. Now that the walls are crumbling around the world, helped along by the crowbars of angry patriots; now that the faces of the other look pretty much like our own, the Outside seems to be shrinking. In its place we have some dawning version of the Global Village, whereby a denizen of Zamboanga wears the same sneakers and listens to the same pop music as a Manhattan sophisticate, and one nation blends imperceptibly into another.

All this worries Andrei Codrescu, the Romanian exile, poet, and radio commentator who since 1966 has lived in the United States, exercising his surrealist magic. Like his fellow exiles Joseph Conrad and Vladimir Nabokov, Codrescu has made the English language his home, and he has written 26 noteworthy books of poetry, fiction, and fact that outstrip most native production. His latest, *The Disappearance of the Outside*, announces his emergent technophobia and his fond hope that the world will retain at least some places to escape the machine; in the age of the computer and the networked planet in which the Global Village has devolved into World Empire, Codrescu frets with just cause that "we may become mere images, trapped like shadows in some collective hell. . . . In another generation, people raised by images will not be able to imagine escape. The walls of Plato's prison-cave will be animated."

Much of Codrescu's book-length essay concerns his return to Romania after the fall of Nicolae Ceausescu in December of 1989. Arriving in his hometown of Sibiu, Transylvania, Codrescu notes with some surprise that images have replaced words in bibliocentric Eastern Europe, that television programs and not books temper the intellectual climate of the land where, as a boy, he prowled through bookstores and private libraries, even hanging out in the Russian-language Communist Party bookstore to take advantage of the air-conditioning. And what shows are beamed into Romanian homes, haunted by Ceausescu and Dracula? *Dallas*, *Dynasty*, and *Miami Vice*, the stuff of brain death in many an unsuspecting land.

Invisible in the way of a practiced exile, Codrescu affords a moving account of life in revolutionary Romania, democratic for the moment but still aswarm with Stalinists, unrepentant agents of the Securitate, and other enemies of liberty. But this account is secondary to Codrescu's larger meditation, centering not only on the disappearance of the Outside but on the subtle erasure of cultural differences in the age of worldwide television and computer data networks. (While there is much merit to Codrescu's argument, at the same time, ethnic hatred seems to be on the rise everywhere as borders of all kinds dissolve — witness Azerbaijan and Bensonhurst.) Like many other theorists of the Information Age, Codrescu speculates upon the possibilities for global electronic control, of a technototalitarianism serviced by a deliberately uneducated, politically apathetic, and terrorized population, uncomprehending helots whose days are spent in equal parts at the workplace and before the television set. (All those to whom this sounds familiar may now shudder.)

"We are a new kind of being now," writes Codrescu. "We don't need an unconscious, we *are* unconscious." Overwhelmed by information and inured to all the high-level lying language is used to accomplish, most citizens of the world now shun the written word whenever possible. To lure them back to literacy, "we should wage a campaign against too much information," the poet writes, "like the campaign against cholesterol. Down with info-fat!"

There may be hidden virtues for bibliophiles like Codrescu in the electronic world. In it, the book may regain some of its status as a sacred object, precisely because it lies on the periphery of the general culture. History has accustomed us to changing fortunes, and the book age is, after all, very

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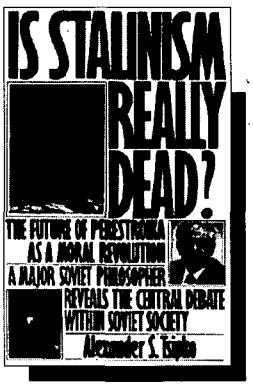

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young; Johann Gutenberg's first printed book dates to 1436, and it has been a mere five hundred years since Erasmus of Rotterdam leaped from his carriage, squatted in a muddy lane, and inspected a scrap of newsprint, so thrilled was he to encounter the printed word. There may yet be a future for the written word; on the other hand, the age of the book may be over before it reaches its 600th birthday.

What is to be done? Codrescu issues what he calls "a manifesto for escape," directed in large measure at his fellow writers. He calls for a renewed reverence for language and for telling the truth with it; he calls for public discourse and an end to the present condition wherein, as he puts it, "most writing today appears headed for the résumé, its final resting place." He urges us to take the example of other exiles, who went Outside rather than submit to the tyranny of their homelands: Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Czeslaw Milosz, Guillermo Cabrera Infante, Milan Kundera. He demands a repudiation of worldwide culture, a return to a planet on which Times Square is markedly different from Piccadilly Circus and the Ginza in every particular. And he sets a high subversive goal for his peers: "The poet's job," he announces, "is to short-circuit the imaginary globe."

Codrescu's manifesto is stimulating and, like all his books, impeccably well-written. It brims with the writer's hallmark aphorisms, his witty one-liners to trap the unwary: "Modern Russia is an homage to Henry Ford, not to Karl Marx." *The Disappearance of the Outside* is a reader's delight as well, a long evening's entertainment, a book that provokes nods of assent, provides plenty of room for argument, and raises as many questions as it attempts to answer. Switch off the set and have a look.

Gregory McNamee's most recent book is The Return of Richard Nixon and Other Essays.

BRIEF MENTIONS

BODY by Harry Crews
New York: Poseidon Press; 240 pp., $18.95

Dorothy Turnipseed, rechristened Shereel Dupont by her trainer and free-weighted into world class shape, has arrived at a Florida hotel for the Ms. Cosmos world championship women's bodybuilding contest. Come to cheer her on, all the way down from Waycross, Georgia, in a pair of pickup trucks, are her huge relations and her psychotic fee*and*say, Nail Head. There to provide her stiffest competition is Marvella, a heavyweight from Detroit with four equally large, equally deltoid sisters loudly in tow. For Shereel's trainer Russell Morgan it is the championship he was never so much as in the running for. For Shereel it is the fight of her life.

Fans of *Pumping Iron II: The Women* should line up for this novel, to which the movie bears some relation. The contest there as here is between the advocates of "femininity" vs. "muscularity," what is evidently the great controversy among women bodybuilders. But the true theme of the novel is Crews' usual one, that the competition is everything. Eating, sleeping, intimacy, talk—everything is a battle and the winner will take all. And for Nail Head, forged into violence by the Vietnam War, and his childhood sweetheart Shereel, forged by Russell, the Ms. Cosmos competition quickly becomes the decisive event of their lives, beyond which is either everything or nothing.

Like all Crews' writing *Body* is not something to give your great-aunt; he takes a pleasure in the perverse that is unnerving. More unnerving still is the fatalistic logic of his Grits characters, a self-destructiveness that comes from legitimate anger at the world and, most importantly, strength. His Turnipseeds are demoralizing, funny (not laughable) and admirable, and they are, for all their bizarreness, very real. Pure tragedy is pure theater. *Body*, billed as a tragicomedy and very funny in parts, is much more like life.

Harry Crews, with his love of martial arts and boxing and other kinds of physical abuse, has like his characters made something of a cult of strength. *Body* may not be, as touted, the best book of his career—I remain most partial to *The Gospel Singer* myself—but all those weeks of power typing have not been wasted.

—*Jack Ramsay*

Only the Boring

by Janet Scott Barlow

Dark Star: The Roy Orbison Story
by Ellis Amburn
New York: Lyle Stuart/Carol Publishing Group; 283 pp., $18.95

◆

Generally speaking, fans of early rock and roll fall into two categories: those who want to hear Roy Orbison's "Only the Lonely" more than once a year, and those who don't—and I belong to the latter group. One of the strengths of vintage rock was that it meant nothing more and nothing less than what its teenage audience said it meant (unless, of course, you listen to rock critics, but nobody does, which is why, impotent and resentful, they write mainly for each other). I always thought the music existed to make you want to laugh out loud, or dance, or take a wallow in adolescent melancholy, the experience songwriter Mickey Newbury called "feeling good feeling bad."

But rock and roll wasn't meant to *create* pain, and that was my problem with Roy Orbison—his voice and his songs were nothing if not emotionally wounded. In addition, no one in rock and roll possessed a physicality less suited to rock style. Orbison had no "moves" (there was a certain integrity in that, but it wasn't the kind of integrity I was interested in), and when he covered his small, pale frame in shades, dyed and molded blue-black hair, and a black jumpsuit, he looked like somebody's country uncle dressed up for Rock Around the Clock Night down at the VFW.

But people who love Roy Orbison's music really *love* it, and he occupies an important, if slightly off-center, niche in rock and roll history. His untrained voice was beautiful and unique. His songwriting and musicianship were admired by his contemporaries. And his life, which included early poverty, personal tragedies, drug abuse, and a trip from fame to obscurity and back again, is the stuff of rock legends. What's more, he is surely alone among first-generation rockers in having enjoyed comic books *and* the writings of Winston Churchill.

Why then, is Ellis Amburn's *Dark Star* so tedious? Is it because rock legends who live fast and die before

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their time have become a pop culture cliché? Is it because Orbison's persona, despite the rock trappings, was uncharismatic? Or is it because Ellis Amburn, who previously collaborated on books with Shelley Winters and Priscilla Presley, lacks the capacity to be surprised by his subject?

One rule of thumb in these cases is: when in doubt, blame the writer. There is no sense in *Dark Star* that its author views Roy Orbison, who died of a heart attack in 1988 at the peak of an amazing comeback, as anything but convenient and timely book fodder. Much of *Dark Star* is biography as itinerary ("Roy . . . made the day-long trip to Fort Worth . . . Roy flew to Canada in October . . . After Texas, Roy was off to Santa Ana, California"). There is no attempt to explore, much less understand, the complexities that accompany a creative personality. Some of Orbison's friends describe him as gentle, gracious, shy, modest, and even-tempered; others call him egomaniacal, vengeful, spoiled, vain, envious, and self-pitying. These contradictions simply sit there on the page, as the author moves on to yet another list of cities for yet another of Orbison's tours.

Likewise, the only worthwhile insights into the mysteries and pleasures of a natural vocal gift like Orbison's come not from the author but from the singer himself: "It was sort of a wonder. It was a great feeling, and it didn't hurt anybody, and it made me feel good, and some people even said, 'Roy, that's nice.' I've always been in love with my voice. It was fascinating, I liked the sound of it, I liked making it sing, making a voice ring, and I just kept doing it."

In fact, were it not for Orbison's own words (most of them culled from previously published interviews), *Dark Star* would lack any vividness at all. In an insufficient yet repetitive chapter on Roy Orbison's unhappy adolescence as a misfit in Wink, Texas (a chapter in which I entertained myself by keeping a list of the colorful names of Orbison's family and friends, names like Orbie Lee, Coyt, Clois, Hezzie, Double O, Pooky, Freako, Slob, and one female Jake), the time, the place, and the man come together sharply only when Amburn quotes Orbison's comments to *Rolling Stone*: "[I]t was macho guys working in the oil field, and football, and oil and grease and sand and being a stud and being cool. I got out of there as quick as I could. . . . It was tough as could be, but no illusions. No mysteries in Wink."

But the real problem with *Dark Star* is that it contains the kind of red-flag errors that raise questions about the credibility of everything that surrounds them. For the record Janis Ian wasn't a "rock singer," she was a folk singer; Jerry Lee Lewis's "first single" release for Sun Records wasn't "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On," it was "Crazy Arms," and Elvis Presley's birthplace, as even non-fans are aware, was Tupelo, Mississippi, not Memphis. (Furthermore, it is preposterous to compare Roy Orbison to Jimmy Durante, even if Ellis Amburn does believe, for some strange reason, that "each was a phenomenon who escaped being made into a joke . . . by a hair's breadth.")

In question here is the credibility of Amburn's thesis, which is that Roy Orbison was "as dangerous as a loose cannon," a man destroyed by the "poison" of success. As proof, he offers examples of Orbison's disregard for his health, as if fastidious health habits would mean anything to a man defined from boyhood by an obsession with fame, wealth, and popular acceptance. He writes darkly of Orbison's compulsion to work, suggesting it was some sort of curse, but it's obvious that Orbison's achievement of his own desires—to succeed in the 60's, survive failure in the 70's, and renew his career in the 80's—would have been impossible without his determined work ethic. And some ideas are so overwrought as to be unfathomable. Of Orbison's habit of watching several movies in a row before starting a recording session ("It freshens my mind," he said), Amburn writes that it "smacked of idiosyncrasy [sic] bordering on insanity."

Roy Orbison was a poor, insecure, and unhandsome country boy who used his talent to make real his dreams of fame, fast cars, and pretty women. Ellis Amburn contends melodramatically that the realization of Orbison's dreams was in fact a tragedy. But *Dark Star* offers no evidence that Orbison himself regretted the life he created. And why should he have regretted it? For a man who considered himself both physically ugly and musically "fascinating," which would be harder to accept: rock and roll stardom, or jobs chopping weeds and playing honky-tonks in west Texas?

Janet Scott Barlow covers popular culture from Cincinnati.

LIBERAL ARTS

LOTTERIES, LOVE, AND LITIGATION

The number of cases of former couples fighting over claims to lottery winnings are increasing, and lawyers have hit the jackpot. Thirty-two states and the District of Columbia have lotteries, and lawsuits similar to the two that occurred in Florida earlier this year are bound to become more common.

Florida's latest lottery lawsuit came in late May, when June Shaner, a Port St. Lucie waitress, sued her ex-fiancé for one-quarter of a $16 million New York jackpot won in 1987. According to Ms. Shaner, he bought the winning ticket with money earned at the plumbing business she owned but failed to give her any of the proceeds when they moved to Florida and split up last December.

Shaner's charge followed a dispute in Stuart, Florida, where a jury awarded Lewis Snipes one-quarter of his ex-wife's $31.5 million Florida jackpot. The jury argued that Snipes was entitled to a share of the prize, since he bought the winning ticket only to see his ex-wife sign it and split the money with her sister. Snipes, however, said he may reject the award and seek half of the jackpot.

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Unfortunate Majorities

by Wayne Lutton

The Population Explosion
by Paul R. Ehrlich and Anne H. Ehrlich
New York: Simon and Schuster; 320 pp., $18.95

◆

Twenty-two years ago Paul Ehrlich published *The Population Bomb*. In an effort to dramatize his thesis, he included a number of scenarios about the future. These tended to obscure the thrust of his work, for many viewed them as predictions. When they failed to come to pass, it was easy — especially for conservatives — to conclude that Ehrlich's basic message was wrong.

Since the end of the Second World War, the earth's human population has soared. In 1945 there were approximately 2.4 billion people; by 1968, when *The Population Bomb* appeared, the number had grown to 3.5 billion. Now there are 5.3 billion and 95 million more are being added annually. Yet, while population has been surging, the number of net food-exporting regions has shrunk. Fifty years ago Europe was the major importer of grain and Asia, Africa, and Latin America, along with North America, had surplus crops to sell. This is no longer the case. Today there are fewer than ten reliable food exporters (the United States, Canada, the European Economic Community, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, and Thailand). And their ability to produce surpluses indefinitely is by no means assured. In *The Population Explosion*, Paul and Anne Ehrlich, both of whom are associated with Stanford University, argue that the earth's virtually unrestrained population growth is the root cause of potentially calamitous environmental problems. If we do not address this issue head on, they suggest that natural forces, such as even more widespread famine and disease, will take their inevitable toll and bring human numbers into balance with the world's carrying capacity.

The authors link overpopulation to an alarming array of environmental phenomena: acid rain, ozone depletion, draining of groundwater reservoirs, the loss of topsoil (25 billion tons yearly), desertification and deforestation, and the "fecal snow" (windblown human excrement) that blankets Mexico City. Much of the damage appears to be irreversible, and substitutes for damaged resources — such as for fresh water — are not available at any price.

Those who have been lulled into complacency by the arguments of the Alfred E. Newmans of neoconservatism — Julian Simon and Ben Wattenberg — should pay especial attention to chapters four through eight of this book, which review such matters as food and the ecology of agriculture, population and public health, and "Growthism" and national security. Now that almost all of the reasonably arable land is being farmed, the seas are being vacuumed of edible fish, and another eighty thousand square miles of land are being reduced to zero economic productivity every year, we cannot airily dismiss expressions of concern with overpopulation as manifestations of environmentalist hysteria. The mass migration from the Third World to the United States, Canada, and Northwestern Europe represents a movement not of "freedom lovers" (why don't they stay where they are and build republican institutions throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America?) but of people looking for space in what are the most habitable remaining parts of our planet.

The Ehrlichs are better at describing some of the ways in which overpopulation affects our natural resource base than they are at providing pointers on how to deal with the problems they identify. They sprinkle their concluding chapters with liberal cant about racism, sexism, and economic inequality; advise Americans that we shouldn't try to halt illegal immigration from Mexico; encourage readers to tease their relatives and friends who have more than one or two children; and call for the establishment of some sort of Global Commons Regime.

The Population Explosion provides useful information and may help to focus attention on the importance of the population factor on present and future world events. But as Garrett Hardin has pointed out, many "global" problems, including that of population density, are matters that are best dealt with at the local and national level. We cannot dictate to others how to live. Nor should our generosity and concern for the plight of others blind us to the need to preserve the best of what we have. As Hardin remarks in *Stalking the Wild Taboo*, "It is unlikely that civilization and dignity can survive everywhere; but better in a few places than none. Fortunate minorities must act as the trustee of a civilization that is threatened by uninformed good intentions."

Wayne Lutton is coauthor of The Immigration Time Bomb. *He writes from Mecosta County, Michigan.*

Glasnost I

by Michael Warder

The Great Reforms
by W. Bruce Lincoln
DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press; 296 pp., $29.00 (cloth), $12.00 (paper)

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A decade ago, when Leonid Brezhnev was still the leader of the Soviet Union, W. Bruce Lincoln wrote of *glasnost* and its role in Russian politics. His book, *In the Vanguard of Reform*, might today be making seers and soothsayers envious but for the fact that the dynamics of change he described were those of Czarist Russia in the mid-19th century, not those of the Soviet Union at the end of the 20th. Now, with his latest work, *The Great Reforms*, he reintroduces new-old Russian words like *zakonost* and *proizvol* in order to "shape a synthesis of the Great Reform Era" and to reexamine the success or failure of the Russian governmental reforms of the 1860's in light of the scholarship of the last thirty years. At a time when news sources regularly trumpet change and *perestroika* in Moscow, it may be useful to reconsider previous reform efforts in Russian history. Perhaps, indeed, it is the only way to gain perspective on current Russian reform.

Not once does Lincoln indulge in facile parallels between then and now. He is enough of a historian to know that you cannot step in the same river twice. Instead, he draws on his five

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previous works of 19th-century Russian history, as well as upon new archival sources, to develop important means of analysis that help make intelligible the ultimate failure of the effort to reform the autocracy of Czarist Russia. There is little doubt that these same means are most helpful in understanding the challenges facing the various nationalities contained by the Soviet Empire.

Czarist Russia suffered a humiliating defeat in the Crimea at the hands of the Turks, French, and British in 1856. In 1855, in the midst of the war, Czar Nicholas I died after a reign of thirty years, and his thirty-six-year-old son, Alexander II, inherited the highly centralized and bureaucratic "Nicholas system" of government. How bureaucratic a system was this? Minister of Internal Affairs Lev Perovskii informed Nicholas that his ministry alone processed 31,103,676 documents in 1850; provincial governors spent six hours each day signing official documents at the rate of 100,000 per year. In the 1840's there existed an accumulation of three million decrees and official requests waiting to be acted upon. There was the case of the Baltic governor who had to wait a fortnight for official papers from St. Petersburg before he could fix the faulty flue in his office. Gogol's *Inspector General* and *Dead Souls* captured the absurdity of the system, and the defeat in the Crimea only dramatized the need for reform. How could such a mind-numbing apparatus come into being?

Minister of Public Instruction S.S. Uvarov described the Nicholas system as dependent on three fundamental concepts: Orthodoxy, autocracy, and nationality. The Russian Orthodox Church, the office of the czar, and the Russian nation combined to legitimize czarist authority. But as the Russian Empire grew in the 18th and 19th centuries, these three concepts produced a massive and highly centralized system. Nothing could be decided at a local level without the approval of the czar, and innovation or response to change at the local level was simply impossible. The idea of a citizen society (*grazhdanskoe obshchestvo*) characterized by decentralization and self-government was something that a small number of aristocratic intellectuals began to discuss.

Between 1845 and 1856, 513 educated men joined the Imperial Russian Geographic Society. Founded perhaps for reasons of czarist pride, the society nonetheless strove to make known facts about the boundaries and natural resources of the growing Russian Empire. It was truly remarkable that such an organization should exist at all, since the Nicholas system had no tradition of scholarship or learning. (In 1850, in a population of 55 million, there were only three thousand university students.) The society had no apparent political axes to grind, but it did strive for accurate information, and it was in this context that the word *glasnost* first came into usage. The idea was that issues of interest to the society needed to be discussed freely. The opinion of the czar and of the church mattered little in these discussions, and it was not long before the idea of assessing more precisely the condition of the peasants, the size of the annual harvest, population figures, manufacturing data, and so on, began to emerge. To strive for accurate, if disagreeable, information was an astounding activity considering the political culture in Russia at the time. As historian and public official B.N. Chicherin wrote in 1856: "One can say without exaggeration that every official statement is nothing but a lie. All reports and dispatches from our leading statesmen are lies. All reports and dispatches of governors and other regional authorities are, in fact, lies. All statistical data are lies."

Nineteenth-century Russia was not unique in shielding its political rulers from displeasing realities that flew in the face of political decrees. But by the mid-19th century other countries in Europe were developing leadership elites that could debate political policies in parliaments protected by law, while Russia still relied on *proizvol*—the arbitrary and personal authority of the czar. *Glasnost*, in this context, was simply a means of discovering more accurate truths. Yet by itself, *glasnost* was insufficient to reform the Nicholas

THE FARM BUREAUCRACY

Analyzing the direct and indirect effects of all U.S. farm programs, including price supports, marketing orders, food distribution, credit and export subsidies, and conservation of natural resources, Ernest C. Pasour, Jr., shows in ***Agriculture and the State*** that these programs have conflicting objectives, only hurt the small farmer, and most importantly, victimize the public-at-large. This comprehensive book exposes current government farm policies as harmfully anachronistic in an increasingly interdependent world.

"Professor Pasour presents an exhaustive, articulate, and well-written analysis of U.S. farm price and income programs, and makes a persuasive case."
—D. GALE JOHNSON
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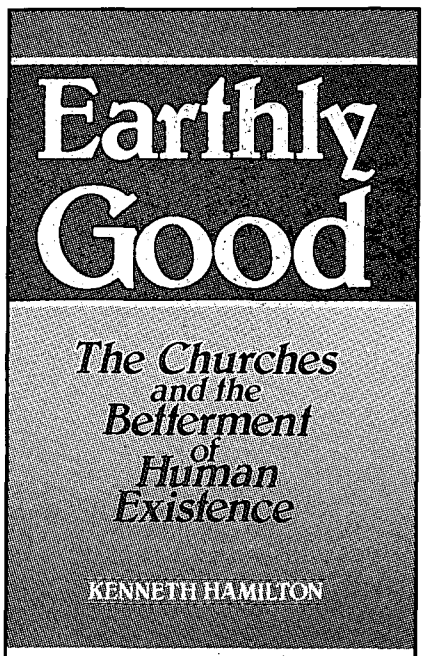

Why are so many churches today stepping to a worldly drumbeat, telling members how to pursue a "good" life here and now? In this hard-hitting book Kenneth Hamilton maintains that churches everywhere are making the mistake of commending the gospel primarily on the grounds of the personal and social good it can bring about on this earth. He argues that abstract utopian theories and Gnostic ideals have infiltrated and infected the modern church, undermining its effectiveness. Hamilton's critique of the modern church is penetrating, and his analysis of the meaning of *tradition* and *modernity* is clear and thought-provoking.

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system. Fundamental reform required *zakonost*—the rule of law. This meant that the czar could not act arbitrarily but that he too was subject to higher laws.

The Judicial Reform Act of 1864 provided for an independent judiciary. Judges from then on were immune from dismissal, even when their opinions displeased the czar. This act provided further for trial by peers, except in political cases. Although Lincoln does not say so, it is apparent that one lesson of the great reform era to be applied now is that Gorbachev and his party cronies need *zakonost*, since liberal and democratic reform, in the classic sense of those terms, is not possible to achieve by fiat from the center. It might be said that all of the earlier reforms were an effort to move from *proizvol* to a citizen society whereby *zakonost* and *glasnost* were universalized. These developments would allow for economic innovation, decentralization, and the reduction of bureaucracy.

A major stumbling block remained: serfdom. How was decentralization and self-government possible when twenty-two million illiterate Russians were bound to the land as property of the aristocracy? At Alexander's request a commission was established to plan for emancipation. Who would compensate the owners for the loss of the serfs? Could serfs own the land they had worked, and, if they could, how would they pay for it? What civic rights would a former serf have? Thousands of meetings and hearings were held across Russia to discuss these questions brought about by the czar's request. These discussions themselves were unusual in Russian history. Long term buy-out agreements were discussed along with land purchase agreements—some of which were to last into the 1950's! The eventual emancipation document was 361 pages long and highly complex. Serfs on the czar's personal holdings were treated differently than state serfs who, in turn, were treated differently than those owned by the aristocracy. All had variations on buy-out and land-use agreements. Peasant communes were formed that had to repay the government for the liberation of peasants in a 49-year payback agreement, and peasants could not move. Some liberation.

Who would be responsible for the ignorant liberated serfs—local aristocrats or government bureaucrats? How could roads, hospitals, schools, and railways get built when each local activity required permission from St. Petersburg? Traditional provincial leaders or army generals enforced the will of the czar, but this system was no longer adequate, especially after the emancipation. In 1864 laws were decreed creating provincial and rural *zemstvos* (councils) that represented nobles, taxpayers, and peasants through a complex mechanism of local elections. While not clearly democratic, the intent was to move to greater decentralization and self-government. Nonetheless, by 1914 only 43 of 70 provinces were successful in creating functioning *zemstvos*.

Alexander II was assassinated in March 1881 by a leftist fanatic from the *Narodnaia Volia* (The People's Will). It was the opinion of leftists in the 1860's and 1870's that the granting of partial freedoms was actually an effort to slow down fundamental changes while preserving Orthodoxy, autocracy, and Russia. The growing student population, in combination with newspapers and other publications, began to shape intellectual opinion at variance with the czar and the aristocracy. Rightist reaction haunted each reform, and when Alexander III assumed the throne in 1881 he tolerated little dissent. As Lincoln writes: "For Russia's emperor and the defenders of autocracy, the duties of a subject superceded the responsibilities of a citizen."

As for the current reforms in the Soviet Union, much of course remains to be seen. Are *glasnost/perestroika* and the like really steps toward decentralization and self-government or merely ploys to let off steam, buy time, and preserve the regime? No one really knows. Change still hangs in the balance. If history is any guide at all, it shows that reform movements can fail if the regime pacifies reformers enough to remain in power. The old regime then determines the meaning of words like *glasnost*, *proizvol*, and *zakonost*, and can make them mean anything it likes.

Michael Warder is the associate publisher of Chronicles.

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Letter From Switzerland

by Geoffrey Wagner

Snow and Chocolates

◆

I shall not easily forget my first visit to Switzerland. The end of the war left my battalion encamped north of Perugia. Leave was suddenly generous, and rides in military transport easy to find, at least for a young ensign in the Brigade of Guards. Hoping to flush a retired uncle in the Bernese Oberland I somehow got onto Geneva's railroad platform where I spent some time gawking at the display of chocolates and bananas (bananas!) in the buffet, hints of a way of life unseen by us for years. For, basically, in North Africa my generation found what it had expected, namely squalor and "wogs," as we fascist beasts termed those we were defending by treaty (though you wouldn't have guessed it from the bartenders in Cairo). But Italy, after all, was part of us, our cultural heritage, and as we had fought up through its "soft underbelly of the Axis" (thanks, Churchill) many of us had done so aghast at its pathetic chaos and misery, probably forgotten today. Read John Horne Burns' *The Gallery* and bleed at a record of it all.

So there I stood on that immaculate station platform without a plug nickel of negotiable currency since CMF (Central Mediterranean Forces) were at that time paid with AMGOT (Allied Military Government Tender). I mentioned my ticketless predicament to a Swiss standing nearby, and without question he immediately lent me the wherewithal for my trip. Subsequently I stayed in Zurich at the excellent Zum Storchen hotel and ate the first of many meals at the Veltliner Keller around the corner. A waitress remembered Joyce (as also precisely what he owed them when he died).

Repeating the itinerary after many visits nearly half a century later I still found Zurich to be one of the most underrated cities in Europe, with its charming *Gasse*, or alleys, and their splendid bookshops. The trams still hiss softly down the Bahnhofstrasse, off which other vehicular traffic is kept, conferring a spacious mall-like effect on the city's principal artery. The Storchen has slung a terrace out over the Limmat but otherwise is almost exactly the same as when I first knew it, especially the swans. God bless Zurich for staying the same. Such certainly can't be said for London, with its high rises and traffic jams.

For a New Yorker, Switzerland is a holiday in itself. No one tells you in contemptuous tones to check your bag as you go in a store, panhandlers are inexistent (as are the police, come to that), there are no Gay Rights parades, women vote not to vote, and of course you miss the homeless. What druggies there are seem to be sequestered in a Needle Park north of the main station (now being tidily recreated underground), and the opinion of one Swiss social worker involved with them, whom I saw on TV, was that the quicker they kill themselves the better; an American commentator on the same program could hardly believe his ears.

Joyce's grave is in the egalitarian cemetery, only plain slabs in rows being permitted this homogeneous citizenry, except for a very few notables buried to one side. Joyce is one of these, his slab being adorned with an ugly sculpture. I have a vague feeling that Joyce, who did not live in Zurich very long, has been adopted by the city in some sort of compensation for its lack of indigenous artists of consequence. New to me in the heart of town was the James Joyce pub, an extremely posh place of dimpled leather banquettes, oak tubs, coach horns, and yard glasses, which Jimmy would never have been seen dead in. It served to remind me that clichés are images we sell ourselves as insulation.

The pride of these Swiss towns, like Zurich, Lucerne, Neuchâtel, Bern, is that they weren't bombed together with the rest of Europe. They have preserved prewar standards in almost everything, not excluding morality, of which cleanliness is an outward and visible symbol. More than once I found myself, in common with the hero of that amusing Italian movie *Bread and Chocolate*, looking around desperately guilty with a candy wrapper in my hand.

My mission on this occasion, however, was different to that of the callow young officer of 1946. I was booked into the famous rejuvenation Clinique La Prairie (cellular therapy) at Clarens, of Rousseauvian fame, on the Lac Leman facing towering snow-clad Alps. There the erudite Doctor Valente was my mentor, and on the terrace of my room I reflected on my

LIBERAL ARTS

ALL'S 'HUNKY'-DORY NOW

Artist Luis Jimenez of Hondo, New Mexico, recently appeased the outraged citizens of Pittsburgh by offering to change the title of his 12-foot-tall fiberglass sculpture, *Hunky Steelworker*. Displayed at the Three Rivers Arts Festival from June 1 to June 17, the statue drew criticism from steelworkers and Eastern European ethnic groups in western Pennsylvania, who found the word "hunky" offensive.

According to Sarah Thomason, a professor of linguistics at the University of Pittsburgh, the term originated in the late 19th century to describe people of Hungarian descent, but its use quickly expanded as an insult toward anyone of central European ancestry.

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first visit to these parts after the war. Then I stayed at the Beau Rivage in nearby Ouchy (Lausanne now), where I met a strange gaggle of collabos running for their lives, including the likes of Coco Chanel and Etienne de Beaumont. In those days the refugee rich were in abundance on this little Riviera—I had the dying Countess Potocki pointed out to me, with fortunes on her fingers—and now I found myself performing the same lakeside stroll, or totter, between Vevey and Montreux, one now enhanced by the boxes of flowers set alongside this rather geriatric path.

Passing the grandeur of the Montreux Palace Hotel, with its yellow window blinds, I invariably tipped my hat to the memory of Nabokov who exacted such sweet revenge on a lifetime of detractors by taking, at the end of it, the entire top floor of this sumptuous establishment, its leaded mansards reminiscent of the Negresco in Nice, or the majesty of the old Ruhl there. One can think of worse places in which to shove off.

You may not bathe in these lakes. You may not sound a car horn in any Swiss city, nor erect flashing neon signs, nor paint your dwelling without Cantonal consent. Trains run on time all right, indeed metronomically so, conductors on them being very high-grade personnel indeed. Cars stop for pedestrians at designated crossings and a routine bus driver says good morning to you as you mount.

In this connection a contrast occurred to me when I once saw a buttoned-up Zürcher businessman give a reproving tap of his newspaper (doubtless the *Zürcher Zeitung*) to a vehicle that had slightly encroached onto one of these pedestrian walks. For some years ago an elderly friend performed the same office to a truck in similar circumstances on Lexington Avenue. This time the driver got out, slammed my friend with a wrench, and threw him down into an abandoned building site, where he was discovered unconscious hours later and taken to a hospital. Though it was a sunny afternoon no one intervened. Manhattanites simply went on their way. My friend had to have two operations and died shortly after the second. No one apprehended the driver.

On one visit to Zurich I parked my car in a slot on the Münsterhof. Returning to it after some shopping with my wife I found a policeman on all fours behind it. He was testing the tread on my tires with a pencil-like implement and, finding one of them to be insufficiently deep, required me to change it on the spot. I did not argue. One does not with Swiss authority, as a matter of courtesy more than anything. Immigration is here very strictly controlled, as are temporary work permits. The lessons of neighbors are learnt—all those Algerians in Paris, while it is said there are as many Turks in West Berlin today as in Istanbul.

All this enviable harmony represents an astonishing coordination between three or four language groups. No hostile pressure for bilingualism here, since everyone is trilingual (linguistic researches have shown that if a child early acquires two languages, it has a much greater facility to adopt another). The customary cry of the disaffiliated intellectual is that all this law and order is stultifying, as mirrored in an amusing book by a Swiss called *Fünf Millionen Gerechte*. The degree of self-control seems admirable to a New Yorker, but there was considerable public outcry about it when I was there, both in the excellent local press and on TV. Thanks to a release-of-information act similar to our own, it was discovered that the Swiss government possessed *fiches* on no less than 400,000 of its citizens (a count growing as I left).

The *fiche* is that filing card familiar to Americans registering at any French hotel. But the sheer size of the Swiss self-documentation, more secret and far more invasive than any census, it seems, staggered everyone. I gathered that a large proportion, perhaps a majority, of German Switzerland were what is called *fichiert* in that tongue, as were, rather more understandably, resident foreigners. One *Suisesse* found that a *fiche* had been started on her after she had spent a year at an American university that had been subject to repeated student busts! However, documentation is not necessarily regimentation, and one wonders if without it Switzerland can remain the beacon of sanity it is.

Geoffrey Wagner is an emeritus professor of English at the City University of New York.

Letter From the Lower Right

by John Shelton Reed

What I Did on My Vacation

◆

Last August found our family on a blue highway tour of the Northeast, angling across some of the remoter parts of central Pennsylvania and upstate New York to Lake Champlain, crossing on the ferry for a few days in Vermont. From Vermont, we nipped up to Montreal to extend fraternal greetings to the Quebec secessionists.

Just kidding. They had their hands full with Mohawk irrendentists at the time. But whatever the outcome of Canada's latest constitutional crisis, I do wish the Québécois well. They're absolutely right to be concerned about the threat to their culture from the surrounding Anglophone world. Quebec's stringent French-only sign laws make it look as if you're in a French-speaking country, but I was disappointed, on this first visit, at how easy it is to get along in English. Even the signs seem to compromise when it really matters. On the superhighway, for instance, perhaps wisely, signs explain in both French and English that some westbound lanes become eastbound for the afternoon rush hour. Similarly, a hand-lettered sign on a public toilet said both "Pas fonctionale, eh?" and "Out of order, dude."

But not everyone replied in English to my halting French, and a fine lunch of sausages and *pommes frites* at a businessmen's bistro in Vieux Montreal led me to wonder once again why the French from Saigon to New Orleans are so good at table. It's still far more interesting to cross the border in Vermont than in Michigan, and although it's really none of my business, I'd like to see it stay that way.

Most French-Canadians would, too, of course, but they're now demanding protections that other Canadians may not be willing to give them. As an Anglo reporter for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation complained to me, "they want to be treated as if they make up half the country." Well, a Southerner ought to recognize the doctrine of the concurrent majority when he encounters it, and this Southerner, at least, sympathizes.

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If push comes to shove, will Quebec take a walk? Plainly some separatists have been looking for an excuse, and it may be that Canada is finally as untenable an idea as, say, the Soviet Union. Not long ago *Time* magazine was saying confidently that prosperity had undermined Quebec nationalism, but *au contraire, mes amis*, it may merely have given the secessionists the resources they need to pursue their goal effectively. Montreal is now an impressive city, Quebec is an impressive province, and far more sorry excuses for nations are voting in the United Nations. Americans should be grateful for the fact that Canada has been a good neighbor for a long time, but it's not for us to say what's best for another democracy. If Canada did dissolve into its constituent parts, would it be bad for anyone other than the bureaucrats in Ottawa? I wonder.

Coming back to Vermont from Montreal we stopped in St. Albans to read the historical marker commemorating the October day in 1864 that 22 CSA troopers appeared in that town to give some startled New Englanders a taste of what was going on in Georgia at the time, robbing three banks and stealing some horses before fleeing to Canada. (You take your victories where you find them, OK?) I'm sorry to say that in 1990 nobody in St. Albans gave our North Carolina license plates a second look.

Speaking of license plates, on that same drive I realized that I hadn't noticed any vanity plates in Vermont. I was working up a theory about thrifty Yankees who don't see the point of spending good money to tell strangers what wild and crazy guys they are, when I was passed at high speed by two cars in a row. The first said "SNAKE," the second "OUTLAW." I felt right at home. (Shortly after that I saw a pretty full complement of cutesy plates in the university town of Burlington. So much for my theory.)

Earlier, in Jonestown, Pennsylvania, after we'd stopped at the Buck Inn to drink draft Yeungling and eat fresh fish with my wife's cousin, our teenager, who is only occasionally a good traveler, had grumbled from the backseat that we didn't have to drive this far to see rednecks. Of course I made her wash her mouth out with soap, but she was actually on to something. It's true that the whitetail deer hunters and their girlfriends at the Buck had funny accents, but the music on the jukebox and the humor at the bar were pretty much what you'd find in taverns from Southside Virginia to Texas. I didn't meet Snake and Outlaw (they were moving too fast), but I presume they're the spiritual—maybe the literal—descendants of the rednecks who constituted themselves the Green Mountain Boys and pulled off an operation at Ticonderoga that John Mosby wouldn't have been ashamed of.

A Hank Williams Jr. song on the Buck's jukebox reminded us that country boys come from "little towns all across this land." And from Pennsylvania to Vermont, small-town G.A.R. monuments reminded us that these particular country boys, with their cousins from Ohio and Michigan, kicked Confederate butt in the early 1860's—so effectively that one observer remarked that if he had Confederate cavalry and Union infantry he could whip any army on earth. But to judge from the number of rebel flags I spotted on pickups and T-shirts some of them won't make the same mistake next time. (By the way, the flag is incorporated in the sign for the Fields Tavern, in Lorain County, Ohio, not far from Cleveland. When I passed by in September the Reverend Ed Wojnakowski was preaching at the "Independent Fundamental Baptist" church next door.)

North or South, Hank Jr.'s country boy is the small-town or rural version—sometimes found as a first- or second-generation migrant to some city, too—of the American "high prole" that Paul Fussell described in his book *Class*. These men have their skills: consequently "they have pride and a conviction of independence, and they feel some contempt for those who have not made it as far as they have." They also feel some contempt for the middle class. As one said to Fussell: "If my boy wants to wear a goddamn necktie all his life and bow and scrape to some boss, that's his right, but by God he should also have the right to earn an honest living with his hands if that is what he likes." Fussell argues that high proles have much in common with aristocrats besides scorn for the bourgeoisie. He cites their lack of concern with social climbing, their unromantic attitudes toward women, "their devotion to gambling and their fondness for deer hunting"—in general, their tendency to make games and sports the central concern of their lives.

Be that as it may, V.S. Naipaul was certainly taken with the breed when he encountered them in his travels, described in *A Turn in the South*. A Mississippi informant helped him "see pride and style and a fashion code where I had seen nothing, made me notice what so far I hadn't sufficiently noticed: the pickup trucks dashingly driven, the baseball caps marked with the name of some company." At the end, Naipaul gets downright lyrical about this "tribe, almost an Indian tribe, wandering freely over empty spaces." This view, he says, "gave new poetry to what one saw on the highway."

Naipaul actually has a point (although it's tempting to make fun of him), but it won't do to romanticize these guys. They can be belligerent, sometimes for cause—and nothing makes them more belligerent than condescension—and sometimes just for the hell of it. A middle-class kid like me, growing up in East Tennessee, learned to be wary. Still, if there's going to be a fight, you want them on your side. And it may be that, as a recent, belligerent Charlie Daniels song has it, "What This World Needs Is a Few More Rednecks"—that is, "a little more respect for the Lord and the law and the working man."

I'm writing this from California, recently arrived for an extended visit, and I'm still on the lookout for the West Coast version. We stopped for breakfast one morning in Davis, in the Central Valley, and eavesdropped on a conversation between two working men in the next booth. As trucks loaded with tomatoes rumbled by outside, the one with the tattoos was saying that he used to be afraid of marriage because it was such a permanent commitment, but now that he realizes it's not permanent he isn't afraid of it anymore. Later, his buddy urged him to take some time to go fishing and get in touch with himself. I don't know about this.

John Shelton Reed is living in Palo Alto this year, a stranger in a strange land.

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POLITICS

Jeanne Berg

The Last Jeffersonian

by Bill Kauffman

Let Vermont State Senator John McClaughry describe himself (with what he calls "a notorious Ozark accent"): "I am a 1700's Virginia republican, an 1800 Tertium Quid, an 1830's Loco Foco, an 1850's Republican, an 1890's Western progressive, a 1930's agrarian distributist, and today a plain old decentralist agrarian Reaganaut." It makes perfect sense. Alas, no one gets it.

John McClaughry was born in Paris, Illinois, of a border-state family that "made the same pilgrimage that Lincoln's did." He's from Vachel Lindsay country, and like that sad vagabond poet he knows that the American redemption must start in the small towns:

> O you who lose the art of hope,
> Whose temples seem to shrine
> a lie,
> Whose sidewalks are but stones
> of fear,
> Who weep that Liberty
> must die,
> Turn to the little prairie towns,
> Your higher hope shall
> yet begin.

The wanderlust seized young McClaughry; like many tribunes of rootedness, he was itinerant for a time. He rode the rails west and picked up the hobo name of "Feather River John."

In 1963 he moved to northern Vermont, bewitched by the gods of its hills. He built himself a log cabin and raised a family and plunged into politics, serving in the Vermont House and preaching a Jeffersonian gospel of dispersed power, strong communities, and civic responsibility. He wrote speeches for Ronald Reagan in the late 70's and joined the White House policy staff when came the millennium.

But a Loco Foco is brave and true, and never lubricious enough to slide through the corridors of power. McClaughry was almost fired from his White House job in March 1981 when he flew home in midweek to preside over the Kirby, Vermont, town meeting. He was fount of fresh, unorthodox ideas, the kind that make ambitious careerists write you off as a kook. "My suggestion that we appoint America's most respected Indian elder as the U.S. representative on the U.N. Human Rights Commission, with no instructions but to speak plainly about justice for the oppressed nations throughout the world, was greeted in Foggy Bottom as evidence of advanced insanity on my part," he remembers.

So he took the honorable route, the road less and less traveled: he quit. Yankee stubbornness, an intransigent loyalty to principle, motivated McClaughry. Thoreau's guidance is relevant: "If the tax-gatherer, or any other public officer, asks me, as one has done, 'But what shall I do?' my answer is, 'If you really wish to do anything, resign your office.'"

He went home and got elected to the State Senate on an Old (circa 1798) Republican platform. Though initially pegged as a wild man, a troglodyte, an opponent of the 20th century, he has won grudging plaudits for his wit, hard work, and seriousness of purpose in defense of a political creed that elsewheres goes unchampioned. And he has discovered just how hard a sell Jeffersonianism has become in an America in which nationalism has eclipsed patriotism, and men care more about Madonna than they do the tramp next door.

Vermont is a curious state, politically. Frugal, flinty Yankees are scarce in Montpelier; "woodchucks," as natives are derisively called, are being overrun by those whom McClaughry terms "The Pretty People": affluent immigrants from New York City and Boston, transient Arcadians who've done deals and leveraged and arbitraged and still love the City—*Sunday Times* in bed, MOMA in the aft, a stroll through the Village at dusk—and want to make Vermont as pretty, quaint, and utterly lifeless as a picture postcard. (Over the York border a similar conflict simmers in the Adirondack Mountains, where baseball-capped natives are losing their home ground to the Manhattan summer crowd, with its $400,000 condos and godawful accents and imperious citified demeanors.)

But unlike New York, Vermont hums with discourse. Dissidents are given a respectful hearing. Socialist Bernie Sanders has a shot at winning a seat in Congress this fall. A Green Party, gloriously disorganized, is aborning, inspired by the Burlington anarchist Murray Bookchin. And a populist political scientist (!?!) named Frank Bryan, a scholar of rural governance, is the state's premier tub-thumping orator, if not kin to William Jennings then the Green Mountain State's closest approximation.

Frank Bryan and John McClaughry are close if fractious friends, and they collaborated to write *The Vermont Papers: Recreating Democracy on a Human Scale* (Chelsea Green, 1989), a blueprint for radical restructuring of state government. Proceeding from "values that are libertarian in the face of authority, decentralist in the face of giantism, and communal among our townspeople," they proposed to strip Montpelier of its accumulated powers, reducing it to the "protector of the environment and guarantor of basic civil rights and liberties."

Responsibility for welfare, education, and road maintenance would devolve to "shires," new units of government resembling counties. The shires would be small—average population ten thousand—and extremely democratic: "reeves," or shire legislators,

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would represent constituencies of about two hundred people. Shires would not be mere units of administration; they would actually *make* policy. A liberal Burlington shire, for example, might spend prodigally for welfare, while rural shires opted for Coolidgean parsimony.

With "geography as cocoon and history as memory," Vermont is an ideal site for the rebirth of grass-roots democracy. Its population is scattered amongst 246 small towns steeped in that noble New England tradition, the town meeting. Industrialism, and the dependence it breeds, passed Vermont by. The percentage of self-employed Vermonters is twice the national average; small, locally owned businesses and dairy farms predominate.

(Although the Tennessee Agrarian Donald Davidson once marveled at this "land to which God had given a monopoly of all things good and precise," Vermont is not paradisiacal, and no one knows this better than its neighbor, Upper New York. People on our side of the border are friendlier and less pretentious. Our natives are not as sullen; our newcomers are not as uppity. Our maple syrup tastes better. Etc.)

The Vermont Papers was radical and reactionary, as any modern expression of the Spirit of '76 is bound to be. Its vision of men and women as *citizens* — rooted, community-minded people who enjoy their liberty but are ever mindful of their obligations to neighbors and the less-fortunate — seems a charming anachronism in this rootless age. So, too, its celebration of local pride and healthy parochialism.

But populist anger also infuses the book: resentment against The Pretty People and those who disparage ordinary, undegreed Vermonters. McClaughry confesses to "a natural animosity toward urbanism," and that bias has led some reviewers to conclude, in McClaughry's words, that "these guys are living in a dreamworld of hobbits in the back country." They do not address the maladies that the TV newsmen tell us *really* matter: AIDS, the homeless, South Africa, drug dealers bumping each other off. Serious problems, to be sure, but irrelevancies to the tens of millions of Americans who live in small towns and rural communities, who are fast becoming subjects of metropolitan rulers, serfs of large distant corporations.

Ironically, Vermont reviews of *The Vermont Papers* have generally been less perceptive than notices in national publications. The problem is McClaughry's reputation. "The mere mention of this man's name brought foam to the mouths of liberals," a Vermont reporter has written.

McClaughry's failure to reach left decentralists recalls the only other politician, in memory, to peddle such a thorough and plausible plan for reform: Norman Mailer. Brooklyn's favorite fugging son, in his 1969 Democratic primary campaign for Gotham's mayoralty, proposed the virtual abolition of New York City's government and the devolution of power to the neighborhoods, along the lines of Jefferson's ward republic scheme. Mailer called himself a "left conservative," but no one to the right of Greenwich Village ever listened, and he lost badly.

The McClaughry-Mailer parallel experiences are a sobering lesson to decentralists. Mailer was right on every important issue — he even opposed fluoridation of the water supply — but Manhattan's tuxedoed conservatives gave him nothing but sneers. (He wrote novels containing swear words, don't you know, and said nice things about the Black Panthers' demand for Harlem control of Harlem schools.)

McClaughry, despite his Greenish hue, his communitarian language, his populist attacks on concentrated wealth, is a *bête noire* to the Vermont left. Like Mailer, his failure to break through the liberal-conservative gossamer is due to style. He likes country and western music. He uses "Captive Nations" in conversation. He twits the gay rights movement.

But dammit, the man has something to say, and if Jeffersonianism is ever going to be resurgent in our America John McClaughry's the likeliest standard-bearer. He's a homespun populist but no demagogue; he's an intellectual fluent in the vernacular of American politics; he's a Northern Agrarian, an admirer of both the Virginia planter-statesmen and the Vermonters who defied the Fugitive Slave Law. He loves history, lives and breathes it; Ethan Allen is very real to him.

McClaughry has portraits of his heroes on the wall: Jefferson, of course, and John Taylor of Caroline and Fighting Bob LaFollette and Robert Taft and his old boss Reagan. He is a good friend of Green writer-activist Kirkpatrick Sale, and is undoubtably the only Reaganite ever to serve on the board of directors of the E.F. Schumacher Society. He knows that the wisemen of 20th-century politics are buried in the footnotes: Amos Pinchot, Burton K. Wheeler, Herbert Agar, and the unheeded prophets who wrote *I'll Take My Stand* and *Who Owns America?*.

He is also fond of ex-Oklahoma Senator Fred Harris, who with his classic motto, "No More Bullshit," enlivened the 1972 and '76 Democratic presidential primaries. McClaughry's requiem for Harris's career serves, too, as a self-assessment: "Fred is an early 1900's Populist who's been propelled forward in time with all the talents that would have made him a contender in 1916, but now, no one gets what he's talking about."

Harris never figured out how to get his message across. Maybe McClaughry won't, either. After McClaughry's losing primary campaign for the U.S. Senate in 1982, his buddy Frank Bryan described the hurdle that the candidate hadn't leaped: "How, with limited funds, to articulate his views to an electorate that does not possess the necessary concepts or language?"

Power to the Shires! has not caught on as a battle cry in Vermont yet, but there are favorable auguries. *The Vermont Papers* was enthusiastically reviewed in the pages of the *Nation* and *National Review*; the New Age bellwether *New Options* gave it lavish front-page treatment. On the home front, Bryan and McClaughry spearheaded a Republican/Green Party onslaught that defeated Governor Kunin's land-use master plan.

A Jeffersonian renaissance in Vermont would be a wonderful way to usher out our bloody century. But even if The Pretty People pot the woodchucks once and for all, keep an eye on John McClaughry. He is, hands-down, the most interesting politician in America; his way, the Ethan Allen-Loco Foco-Prairie Populist way, lies liberty, community, and the genius of the Old Republic.

Bill Kauffman is a novelist now at work on a book about the literary heritage of Upstate New York.

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Jeanne Berg

The Life of an 'Old Republican'

by Clyde Wilson

Nathaniel Macon

Nathaniel Macon (Dec. 17, 1758-June 29, 1837), "Old Republican" statesman, the foremost public man of North Carolina in the early 19th century, was the sixth child of Gideon and Priscilla (Jones) Macon and was born at his father's plantation on Shocco Creek in what later became Warren County. The Macons were French Huguenots in origin, the Joneses English or Welsh. Both families had entered Virginia in the 17th century and were of the gentry when they moved to lands south of the Roanoke River in the 1730's. Macon's early life is known only in outline. Although he attended school under Charles Pettigrew and was enrolled in the College of New Jersey (Princeton) when the American War of Independence began, he was apparently, like Washington, largely self-taught. Certainly his reading was wide and his mind neither provincial nor narrow as has sometimes been suggested. His speeches indicate an astute knowledge of foreign lands and public finance, and in a not untypical letter Macon could casually mention David Hume, Gustavus Adolphus, and the Apocrypha.

Macon took the field with the New Jersey militia in 1776. When his college closed he returned home to Warren County to read law (which he never practiced) and English history. The interruption in his military service was not unusual since the Revolutionary War was fought by fits and starts and gentlemen served at will. (A similar hiatus occurred in the service of James Monroe and John Marshall.) Macon reentered the army in 1780 in a company raised and commanded by his brother. Typically, he refused a commission and the enlistment bounty. He was probably present with the American forces during the disastrous Camden campaign. In 1781, while a private soldier encamped on the Yadkin River, Macon received word of his election to the North Carolina Senate, which he reluctantly entered and to which he was reelected until 1786. He was immediately recognized as a leading member.

After the War of Independence, Macon served for a time in the House of Commons and was identified with Willie Jones and the predominant anti-Federalist sentiment in North Carolina. He declined to serve in the Continental Congress in 1786 and his brother, John, voted against the Federal Constitution in both North Carolina ratifying conventions. However, Macon accepted election to the federal House of Representatives and entered the Second Congress in 1791. He remained a member of the House for the next 24 years until he took a seat in the Senate, where he remained 13 years. He represented North Carolina in Congress from age 33 until his voluntary retirement at age 70. In the House from 1791 to 1815, he was Speaker 1801-1807, candidate for Speaker in 1799 and 1809, and chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee 1809-1810. In the Senate from 1815 to 1828, he was chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee 1818-1826 and president pro tempore 1826-1828. In both houses he served on the main financial committees and chaired numerous select committees. During his congressional service he declined Cabinet appointments at least twice, and he served long periods as trustee of the university and militia officer and justice of the peace in Warren County. For the first third of the 19th century he was the dominant personality of the predominant Democratic-Republican Party and the most respected citizen of North Carolina both within and without the state.

It was Macon's pride that he never campaigned for an office or asked any man for a vote. His legislative and political skills were neither rhetorical nor managerial. His strength and influence lay in personal force, exemplary integrity, shrewdness, a contented (or static) public, and undeviating adherence to fundamental principles. These principles, forged in the Revolution, did not change in a political career of half a century. The principles included individual freedom, strict economy and accountability in government expenditures, frequent elections, limited discretion in officials, avoidance of debt and paper money, and republican simplicity in forms. Macon was the purest possible example of one type of "republican" produced by the American Revolution. He was satisfied with a society of landowners who managed their own affairs and wanted neither benefits nor burdens from government. He wanted a government conducted with honesty, simplicity, and the maximum liberty for the individual, community, and state. He believed that North Carolina approached this ideal, and he fought a losing battle to hold the federal government to it. To Macon the success of a democracy depended not on the progressiveness and vision of leaders but upon the willing consent of the people. Opposing most appropriations and innovations, even when he stood nearly alone, he has often been described as a "negative radical." True to the spirit of *esse quam videri*, Macon practiced what he preached. He was in his seat faithfully when public business was being conducted, drew from the treasury only his actual travel expenses rather than the maximum allowance (as was the practice), and lived simply in Washington, often sharing a bed with a visiting constituent.

Ideological purity did not detract from Macon's political shrewdness (he advised Jefferson against the abortive

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Chase impeachment, for instance) or prevent him from being chivalric toward opponents in personal relations. Despite his firmness, Macon was often pragmatic in matters of political tactics and knew when to compromise and yield to his party on smaller issues. His judgment was always well-balanced, his dealings moderate. His speeches were businesslike and to the point, his first congressional speech reportedly being one sentence. With one pithy question in debate he burst many grand congressional bubbles. "Be not led astray by grand notions or magnificent opinions," Macon told a young follower. "Remember you belong to a meek state and just people, who want nothing but to enjoy the fruits of their labor honestly and to lay out their profits in their own way." With this philosophy he dominated the state for decades. In only one brief period, 1801-1805, was he a dispenser of federal patronage, and then he refused to use it politically.

Macon's political career had three phases: Jeffersonian Republican leader, 1791-1807; "Tertium Quid," 1807 to about 1815; and elder statesman thereafter. When he entered the House in 1791, he was immediately identified with the group opposed to the emerging Federalists and took a leading role in the parliamentary battles of the 1790's in which the Jeffersonian coalition was forged. These services led to the Speakership, a post which, Macon said, he entered without seeking and left without regret. Losing the chair in a disagreement with the administration wing of the party, which he felt had compromised with Federalist principles and had used rather than eliminated the federal patronage, he was thereafter identified with the "Old Republican" group. He opposed taxes, the protective tariff, a navy, internal improvements (at federal expense), all expenditures not necessary to the honest fulfillment of the most essential functions of the government, a national bank, executive patronage and discretion, and any compromise with Northern antislavery agitation. The principles that John Taylor expounded and John Randolph dramatized, Macon personified. Remaining independent, never attending the party caucus and opposing both Madison's and Monroe's elections, he supported the incumbent administration when he could and never engaged in opposition for opposition's sake. He reluctantly voted for the Embargo. During the War of 1812 he was willing to raise and support troops but opposed a navy, national conscription, and executive discretion.

By the time he entered the Senate in 1815 Macon was already a venerable figure, a stature that increased as survivors of the Revolution and exponents of pure republican principles became rarer. Although he was evidently displeased with the increasingly dynamic politics of the postwar period and felt that true republican virtue was being lost, Macon undoubtedly had a not inconsiderable impact on the next generation as a prophet of both "Jacksonian democracy" and Southern separatism. Towns and counties across the South were named for him. He was widely discussed for the Vice Presidency in 1824 and received the electoral votes of Virginia for that office. In 1828 he was wooed unsuccessfully by John Quincy Adams as a running mate. He was lukewarm to Jackson but gave the Jacksonian coalition his support as a lesser evil from 1828, and served as a Van Buren elector in 1836. He evidently regarded the emergent Democratic Party as the nearest available approach to a coalition of South-

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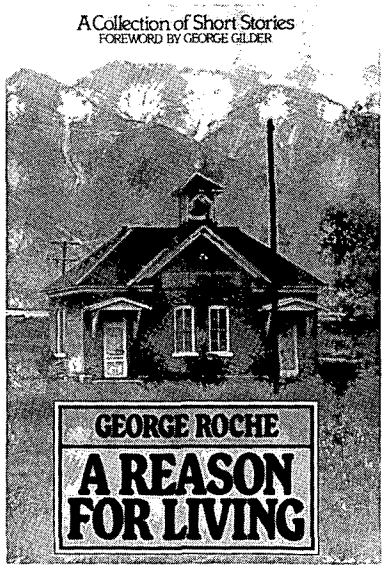

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ern planters and Northern republicans against antislavery agitation and economic exploitation. Opposing nullification and considering secession the proper remedy, he also chastised Jackson for his responding proclamation, which he found to be as contrary "to what was the Constitution" as nullification. In 1835 Macon was unanimously elected presiding officer of the state constitutional convention, although in the end he opposed the revisions that were adopted, especially the change from annual to biennial elections.

Macon's private life was the source of his public principles. Indeed, his classical republicanism postulated that leaders should possess virtue independent of office and should reflect and defend their social fabric rather than attempt to mold it to their own design. His father died when he was five, leaving him land and slaves that increased under his mother's management and his own. Above average in height, of impressive presence, dignified yet simple in manners, treating all classes with courtesy and attention, a pillar of his neighborhood, colloquial in private conversation, devoted to agriculture, horses, hunting, and an outdoor life, laboring in his own tobacco fields, sipping whiskey before meals and keeping fine wine only for guests, Macon was an exemplary patriarchal Southern planter. He never joined a church but attended services accompanied by his slaves and, not surprisingly, is said to have found the Baptist most to his taste. A lifelong resident of the most slaveholding county of the state, he is said to have owned 2,000 acres and 70 slaves and to have divided his estate equally with his two daughters, Betsy and Seignora, on their marriages. His home, Buck Spring, about twelve miles northeast of Warrenton, was built in the most isolated portion of his holdings and was modest for so wealthy and eminent a statesman. The plantation has in recent years been the subject of a restoration project. Macon married Hannah Plummer on October 9, 1783. She died in 1790, leaving the two daughters and a son who died in 1792 at age six.

Macon is said to have destroyed his own accumulated papers, probably out of the same "republican" distaste for pomp and idolatry that led him to oppose expenditures for a tomb for Washington and to forbid the erection of a monument over his own grave at Buck Spring. This fact has discouraged biographers, although, in fact, a large number of Macon letters survive in scattered depositories and publications. He has figured in many articles, addresses, and theses concerning him specifically or Jeffersonian and Jacksonian politics. William E. Dodd's *Life of Nathaniel Macon* (Raleigh, 1903) could be amplified and corrected in many details but remains a substantially accurate and usable work. Perhaps more valuable and practicable than a new biography would be a reliable and complete edition of Macon's speeches and letters, a project that probably could be encompassed in one volume. Likenesses of Macon are rare. Neither the state nor the University of North Carolina owns a portrait. The massive American Library Association index to 19th century engravings does not even contain an entry for Macon. Perhaps the most readily available likeness is the unidentified portrait published in William Henry Smith's *Speakers of the House of Representatives* (Baltimore, 1928).

Macon was a Plutarchian figure who helped to mold the character of his era and his state. "Mr. Macon was one of those patriots who fill a vast space in the nation's eye," eulogized the Richmond *Enquirer*, chief organ of the Democratic Party, on his death. To Jefferson he was "the last of the Romans." John Randolph, in making his will, alluded to the Virginian he had named as his executor as "the wisest man I ever knew—except for Mr. Macon." Later generations preferred a different style of democracy and tended to agree with progress-minded John Quincy Adams, who found in Macon "a narrowness of mind which education cannot enlarge, and covered by an encrustation of prejudices which experience cannot remove." Hugh T. Lefler's history of North Carolina was typical of later evaluations in observing that North Carolina remained "the Rip Van Winkle" of the states until it "repudiated the spirit of Macon." Even a sympathetic writer, J.G. de Roulhac Hamilton, found him "not a constructive force," although a detailed reexamination of Macon's career might well reveal that he was more of a "progressive" on the state and local level than has been believed, that it was remote federal power in the hands of a hostile northern majority eager to tamper with the Southern social fabric and exploit the Southern economy that he wished to negate. At any rate, Macon's republicanism was one of deliberate choice, not of inertia. As William E. Dodd commented with a sense of marvel, *"He actually believed in democracy,"* in allowing the people to govern themselves. He was of a generation, class, and region that "knew the difference between the demands of popular institutions and special interests" and which deliberately chose a limited government as the accurate reflection of its social fabric. Certainly it would seem that the "spirit of Macon" was long the spirit of North Carolina, a spirit which, however foreign to the modern temper, lies at the heart of the origins of American democracy. Perhaps no one ever served the state more unselfishly or better displayed her traditional modest virtues.

Clyde Wilson is a professor of history at the University of South Carolina and editor of the Papers of John C. Calhoun. *This article is adapted very slightly from Dr. Wilson's entry for Nathaniel Macon in the* Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, *recently published by UNC Press.*

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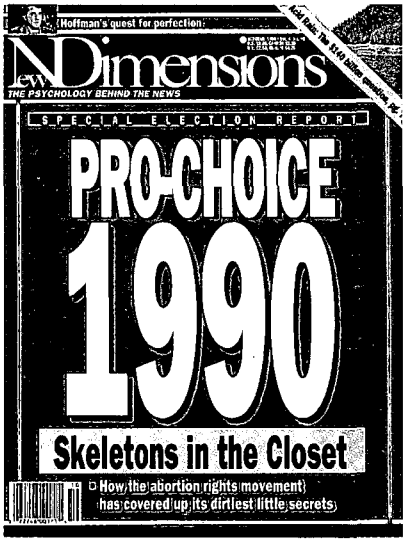
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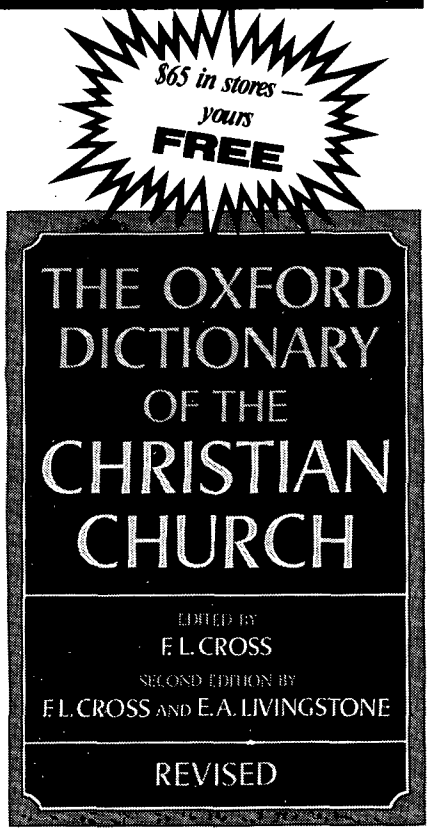

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